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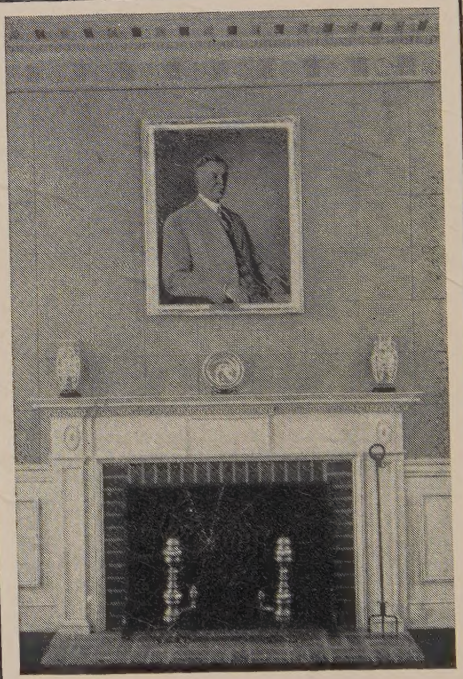

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THE WRITINGS OF
JAMES BRECK PERKINS

IN SIX VOLUMES

VOLUME IV

FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XV.

BY

JAMES BRECK PERKINS

AUTHOR OF "FRANCE UNDER THE REGENCY"

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I.

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FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XV.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONDITION OF FRANCE.

At the close of the regency of the Duke of Orleans the old régime in France was still in full vigor: the government of the country, the general social and intellectual condition of the people, were such as they long had been. Fifty-one years later, Louis XV. ended his inglorious reign; the old régime was then on the verge of dissolution, the beliefs and hopes of the French people had suffered more change than in the century preceding, the economical condition of the country had been greatly modified; a new literature had arisen, new ideas were found in books, were discussed in the salons, and were debated on the streets; the demand was widespread for new social conditions, for laws which should improve the lot of the poor, and should allow to all a greater freedom of thought and action. In this altered society the government still preserved the same outward form, but it needed no prophet to discern that institutions, which seemed as firmly rooted as those of the Medes and Persians when Louis XIV. was proclaimed the Great, were nearing their end when Louis XV. lay on his death-bed. The French Rev-

olution, like the other great events of history, sprang from no accident or sudden caprice, — a political revolution followed an intellectual revolution.

Before relating the events of the half century, so important in their effect on the French mind, it is well to consider the condition of France and her people when the death of the Duke of Orleans left the youthful Louis XV. the ruler of that kingdom. The government of France was an unlimited monarchy. "In my person alone is the sovereign authority," wrote Louis XV. in 1766; "legislative power belongs to me alone; public order emanates from me; I am its supreme guardian." It was the same language that Louis XIV. had used a century before, and both of those monarchs correctly stated the theory of the government of which they were the head. New taxes could be imposed by the king and by him alone; he could make peace and declare war; he could pronounce new laws and disregard old laws; his authority was unchecked and unshared.

Such a form of administration would seem an absolute tyranny, as despotic as that of the Czar of Russia or the Sultan of Morocco; but despotism in a highly civilized state necessarily differs from despotism among barbarous tribes or in rude forms of society. The actual operation of the governing power, whatever may be its nominal form, depends upon the people over which it is exercised. The king of France, by his own action and moved solely by his own desire, could levy a tax of fifty per cent. upon the income of his subjects; he could compel its registration by the courts of law, and his officers could legally proceed with its collection; he could order the arrest of any person, and no court had the right to review his action

or to release the prisoner; the man might remain in confinement for forty years, with no legal means of establishing his innocence or of obtaining his liberty; the king could begin unjust wars, bestow undeserved pensions, squander the proceeds of taxation on his mistresses, and it is impossible to see where there was redress for any grievance, except in the right of revolution.

On the other hand, while the royal authority was legally unrestrained, while it was liable to abuse and was often abused, practically there were many things which the king could not do. If he ordered a man without trial to be taken to the Gréve and beheaded, those who obeyed his bidding would have been liable to no punishment. But he never gave such a command; it would have been so contrary to the recognized jurisdiction of the courts, to the ancient usages of the kingdom, that such an act could properly be said to be beyond his power. Innumerable privileges and local rights remained from the past, or were founded upon bargains made between the ruler and the ruled. Exemptions from many forms of taxation had been granted to cities, to corporations, and to classes; often the king failed to observe the agreements made by his predecessors or by himself, but usually these were respected. The church appealed to its divine origin for protection against the temporal power; the nobility possessed privileges, coming down from the feudal period, which, though often injurious to the community, operated as a restraint upon the unbridled authority of the king. The courts of justice, though they possessed no effective veto upon his acts, asserted their right of remonstrance, and while often forbidden, this continued to be exercised. In a coun-

try where there was no right of petition, where political criticism was unlawful, and a reflection on the wisdom of the rulers constituted a crime, the remonstrances of the judges still furnished an opportunity for discussing the action of the government, without running the risk of a sojourn in the Bastille. Thus the French monarchy might be declared to be absolute, and yet, with equal truth, it might be said to be limited, if not by law, by customs, by privileges, by traditions, which the king had the power to disregard, but which he was sure to respect.

A just idea cannot be formed of the character of the French monarchy, nor of the probability of the king exercising wisely his great authority, without considering his modes of life, his social surroundings, the barriers of etiquette in which he was inclosed, the artificial panoply in which he was encased. Versailles, in the early part of the eighteenth century, witnessed an existence, splendid indeed, but the formality of which had stiffened into rigidity not unlike that of the courts of ancient Assyrian and Babylonian kings; if its etiquette was not so benumbing as the sombre state of Madrid, yet it did not help a monarch to understand the needs of his people, nor to perform the duties of his office.

There was, perhaps, no other person in the world who was so constantly kept in sight, whose every act was attended with such publicity, as the French king. From his rising in the morning to his retiring at night, he was surrounded by a host of attendants; he dressed and dined in public; in health and sickness, during his devotions and on his death-bed, he had about him the same multitude of courtiers. As it was their business to be smiling and respectful, so it

was his business to be smiling and affable, and neither king nor courtier had much time left for anything else.

Who should dress and undress him, serve him at his table, hand him his cane, offer him his gloves, pray for his welfare, pronounce upon him heaven's blessing, was regulated with an anxious care. The disputes over such questions have been preserved for us; unimportant in themselves, they are curious as illustrations of the customs and modes of thought of the time. "There has been a dispute lately," writes the Duke of Luynes, "because the officers of the buttery pretended to the right to serve the dauphin, when he wished to drink, to the exclusion of the under governor; but it was decided they were wrong in their pretension."[1] Not only did nobles contend as to who should hand a glass of water to a child of seven, but the clergy wrangled as to the privilege of pronouncing grace before the king. Rather than waive any right, occasionally all of the holy men would be saying prayers at the same time.[2] Thus perhaps the Lord was the better served.

Those who were received at court there spent their lives; they listened to the sayings and watched the countenance of the sovereign; the opportunity for a word with him was a sufficient reward for hours of waiting. It was not strange that this should be so. From the favor of one man came rank, dignity, and wealth; the ambition of the statesman for office, the zeal of the soldier for promotion, the desire for social prominence, the thirst for money, could all be satisfied by the monarch. "He who considers," says La Bruyère, "that the face of the monarch causes the

[1] *Mémoires de Luynes*, i. 125. [2] *Ib.*, i. 400.

felicity of the courtier, whose life is occupied with the desire of seeing him and being seen by him, may understand how the sight of God suffices for the glory and the bliss of the saints."

The French sovereign was constantly attended by a great number of nobles and of humbler followers; the pomp of his court has rarely been equaled and never excelled. All the day long an unbroken stream of carriages rolled between Versailles and Paris. Large as were the halls of the palace, they could not always contain the throngs that wished to enter. Almost every member of this multitude was a picturesque object to the eye; the dresses of the gentlemen were as rich, as varied in their material and coloring, as those of the ladies; they were as well furnished with laces and ruffles; the gorgeous decorations of many orders were resplendent on the men; a profusion of jewels set off the beauty of the women; courtesy and grace were not often wanting in an assemblage where almost all were of gentle birth and studied the art of pleasing from the cradle to the grave.

A spectator has described the appearance of the court on one evening, and the scenes which could there be witnessed on all evenings were much the same. The great gallery at Versailles was lighted by three thousand wax candles, and the spectacle of the vast hall brilliantly illuminated and filled with well-dressed people was dazzling. There were elegant toilettes, and many distinguished foreigners were in attendance; one hundred and forty-two ladies were counted in the assemblage, and the number of men was much larger. In the centre of the gallery the king played lansquenet; the Duke of Luxembourg had the honor of standing behind the king's chair;

around the table were Mme. de Pompadour, the dauphin and his wife, Louis's daughters, who were still young girls, and a great number of persons, all distinguished in rank, though not all equally eminent in morality. At the further end of the room the queen had her gambling-table, at which cavagnole was played, and a number of other tables were scattered about, one presided over by the Princess of Conti, and the others by persons of less distinction. Everybody gambled, and sometimes, as was said, even at the court there were some who cheated; the queen was fond of play and she often lost; gambling-debts were among her many embarrassments. On this evening she stopped about ten, at which time supper was served, but it was not until half-past ten that Louis took his place at the lansquenet-table; at half-past eleven he and the queen retired, but the game went on.

In this great palace, to which so many had access, it was hard to keep out intruders; barriers were placed to shut off access from the salon of Hercules and the *salle des gardes*, but still, besides the well dressed who were there, others not so well dressed and without right of entrance could be seen in the assemblage. Some came for curiosity, others were attracted by the opportunities for theft that were furnished at such a place; several tobacco-boxes were stolen, and the officers in the hall made two or three arrests.

If it was difficult to exclude pickpockets from the palace, it was impossible to keep out the wind and cold. On this evening there was a good deal of wind, and some of the candles were blown out. The cold was still more annoying; at the table where the king played, by reason of the crowd gathered around, the

wind did not trouble them, but in some parts of the gallery it was bitterly cold.[1] Thus splendor and discomfort and crime were all to be found together in the halls of Versailles.

The most commonplace remark of the king was caught up and repeated by the courtiers as if it were an utterance of inspired wisdom. One day the conversation turned on some peculiar funeral practices. "His majesty did me the honor to say," writes the Duke of Luynes, "'We are not subjected to such ceremonies.' I felt bound to reply that only his majesty could think of such an event in his own case; we could never even consider its possibility. 'Why not,' said the king, 'must not this happen?' One cannot," adds the enthusiastic duke, moved by Louis's admission that even he must die, — "one cannot be too much impressed by all the marks of piety and goodness in the king." When Thackeray writes in the ballad of "King Canute:" —

"'*He* to die?' resumed the Bishop. 'He a mortal like to *us*?
Death was not for him intended, though *communis omnibus*,'"

we think this the sarcasm of the satirist, but many a polished French courtier addressed Louis XV. in language which differed little from that of the bishop of King Canute.

The number of officials who surrounded the monarch was very large; he could not go from Versailles to Marly, from the Louvre to La Muette, unless he was accompanied by a body of attendants almost as numerous as the Greek army at Thermopylæ. On the king's journey to Chantilly, says the chronicler, there went with him over two hundred servants em-

[1] This account is given by the Duke of Luynes in his memoirs for 1751.

ployed in the kitchen, besides sixty Swiss, whose business was to assist in serving; in all there were seven hundred persons to feed.[1] The pomp of a royal progress was not unworthy of the dignity of the monarch; trumpets sounded loudly to announce his presence; he was attended by bodies of gentlemen, proud to serve as soldiers of the king, and by companies of Swiss guards, curiously and richly dressed, and armed with weapons more gorgeous than useful, and he journeyed over the country with an amount of noise, dust, and display which could not have been exceeded by a state procession of an Assyrian or an Egyptian sovereign. It is not strange that a visit to Fontainebleau cost at least a million livres.[2] The number of persons invested with some office or charge in connection with each member of the royal family was exceeded only by the retinue of the king. More than a hundred persons were required for the care of the dauphin when he was a child of seven.[3] When Marie Leszczynski became the wife of Louis XV., over four hundred offices were at once created, to be filled by those devoted to her service, from ladies of honor to postilions and pastry cooks.[4]

The description of a single ceremonial will show the minute punctilio of this stately and formal existence. When the Princess of Lichtenstein, the wife of the Austrian ambassador, was presented to the queen, the lady of honor met her at the door, and under her escort the princess slowly advanced towards the queen,

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, ii. 446.

[2] *Ib.*, xvii. 38.

[3] *Ib.*, i. 62.

[4] *Dispacci Veneziani*, 213, 514, *MSS. Bib. Nat.* The list of places occupies fourteen pages of the ambassador's correspondence.

making three reverences as she went, after the last of which she paid her compliment to the queen. "In England," says our informant, "the queen salutes the wives of the ambassadors, but it is well known that this is not the usage here." In the mean time, the king having entered, every one arose. He kissed the princess on the cheek, and then she began her retreat, constantly bowing as she went, the lady of honor always at her right hand, and her face turned towards the queen, until at last the door was once more reached. Each detail was carefully watched, as its importance demanded. When the Turkish ambassador was presented, says the duke, our chronicler, and made his various reverences, "the king took off his hat either two or three times, but I could not see well enough to say which with certainty." [1]

There were members of the court who were not satisfied even with this exact and rigorous etiquette; then, as now, there were those who regretted the better manners of the past. "There is a usage which seems to be forgotten," says the Duke of Luynes; "formerly the servant of the king or queen, when entering or leaving the room, made a profound inclination, carrying the hand almost to the ground; but now I see reverences made to the queen which are no more respectful than one would make to a prime minister." [2]

The ceremonial by which the king of France was surrounded would not perhaps have smothered a powerful intellect, but it had a benumbing influence on a man of ordinary parts. So much time was required for entrées and levées, for presentations and salutations, that little remained for the work of gov-

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, i. 376, iv. 75.
[2] *Ib.*, ii. 290.

erning a great state. It is certain that Napoleon could not have displayed his unwearied activity if he had been tied down by such an unceasing routine of ceremony. In the middle of the eighteenth century, at the beginning of an intellectual revolution, on the verge of a social revolution, this life of solemn emptiness still continued, and benumbed the intelligence of the king and of his courtiers.

Far different from the Eastern grandeur of the court of Louis XV. were the surroundings of his great rival, Frederick of Prussia. "If you want to know," writes Voltaire of Frederick, "the ceremonies of the levée, what are the *grandes* and the *petites entrées*, what are the functions of the grand chamberlain, the grand almoner, the first gentleman of the chamber, I will answer that a lackey comes to light the king's fire and shave him, that he dresses himself, and he sleeps in a trundle-bed concealed by a screen. Marcus Aurelius was not more poorly lodged." [1]

"If I were king of France," said Frederick, "my first edict would be to appoint another king, who should hold court in my place."

Louis XV. was not a man who sought relief from ceremony and adulation in any useful work; but, on the other hand, this dull grandeur was not dear to his heart; he did not derive from it the majestic satisfaction which it furnished to his predecessor. From youth to age the king was bored; he wearied of his throne, his court, and of himself; he was indifferent to all things, and unconcerned as to the weal or the woe of his people or of any living person. In his cold contempt of all mankind Louis resembled Frederick of Prussia, and, excepting the chase, there was nothing

[1] Voltaire, *Œuv. Com.*, xl. 69.

in which he took an active interest. His life was licentious, he had many mistresses, but for none of them did he entertain any strong affection. Mme. de Pompadour amused him and he allowed her to rule and ruin France as a reward, but he had for her only a sensual and sluggish attachment; her dominion over him was based on habit, rather than on passion. At Versailles there was an opera on Wednesday, a concert on Saturday, the comedy on Tuesday and Friday, and gaming on Sunday, as well as on most other days, but the king had little taste for any of these things; he was indifferent to spectacles; even gambling did not excite him.[1] He did, however, find a lifelong pleasure in killing either bird or beast. The history of his private life is largely the record of his shooting. On one day we are told he killed 250 head of game; on another he killed 100 in less than two hours, firing 153 times.[2] Guns were less accurate then than now, and this was a good record. In thirty years he is said to have killed 6,400 stags, and the number of pheasants which he bagged is beyond calculation. The hunting-grounds of the French kings were enlarged during his reign; the regulations for the preservation of the royal game were made more severe and onerous.

Respect and affection for the sovereign were deep seated among the French people; these feelings had lost none of their force at the beginning of Louis XV.'s reign, and though they abated somewhat before his death, yet the cries of *Vive le roi*, which always greeted the monarch's appearance, and which we are told by an inmate of Versailles could be heard about the palace almost all the day long, were sincere marks

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, i. 168. [2] *Ib., passim.*

of popular attachment.[1] The strong affection for the sovereign which existed among the people sometimes became adulation in those attached to the person of the king. Even the priest, whose duty it was to tell the monarch of the precepts of religion and of his obligations to the King of kings, was expected to indulge in an outpouring of fulsome praise. This was called the compliment and was a recognized part of the discourse, the absence of which would have been at once noticed. It was a requirement which a loyal clergy never neglected. To take a single illustration, on Easter Day, 1742, the preacher said in his compliment to the king, "The Lord has rendered your majesty the support of kingdoms and empires, the subject of universal admiration, the beloved of his people, the delight of the court, the terror of his enemies; yet all this will but raise your great soul above what is perishable and lead you to embrace virtue and to aspire to eternal beatitude."[2] This compliment of Father Tainturin, with much more in the same strain, was, we are informed, greatly approved, and to such praise from the pulpit did Louis listen all his life. As he reflected on his personal immorality and his political insignificance, and he was quite intelligent enough to realize both, he may well have pondered upon the weight to be attached to the words of the clergy.

Naturally the splendor of the monarchy had to be paid for, and the bill was large. During the eighteenth century the condition of the national finances grew steadily worse, deficits became more alarming, bankruptcy was imminent, until the desperate condition of the treasury compelled the calling of the States Gen-

[1] *Mém. de Mme. de Campan*, i. 89.
[2] *Mém. de Luynes*, iv. 117.

eral. Had Louis XV. and Louis XVI. been able to make the ends meet, the overthrow of the old régime would not have been averted, but it would have been delayed.

What may properly be called the expenses of the monarch, the cost of the court, of palaces, of royal pleasure, royal pomp, and royal lust, were not the largest items in the expenditure of the French government, but they were very great, and a rigorous economy in them would have helped in restoring the balance between income and outgo. No reduction was attempted under Louis XV., and such an effort would have been highly distasteful to him. Of all those who had the ear of the king, there was hardly one who was not personally interested in leaving things as they were, to whom the thought of change was not distasteful and the idea of retrenchment abhorrent. The system of court life which had been fostered by Louis XIV. furnished pleasure and advantage to thousands of people, and the recipients of royal bounty wore cheerful faces, which would have been saddened by projects of reform. The innumerable offices, the inordinate expenses of the court, provided employment and gains, more or less legitimate, to almost every one with whom the king associated. The resistance of those who profited by a lavish expenditure proved too strong even for the laudable efforts of Louis XVI., stimulated by the sagacity and the resolution of Turgot, and Louis XV. was of all men the one to whom the rôle of a reformer would have been most distasteful.

Besides the great sums paid for pensions, the amount spent on the court and the royal family was not far from twenty million livres at the beginning of this

reign, and twice as much at the close, and this sum we must multiply two or three fold to represent equivalent values at the present.[1] The table of Louis XV. and of his children cost almost four million livres yearly, ten times the amount disbursed by a thrifty monarch like Frederick II.[2] In every department the expense was swollen by fraud and shiftlessness. "What do you think this carriage cost me?" said Louis XV. to the Duke of Choiseul. "I could buy one like it for six thousand livres," replied the duke, "but to your majesty, paying as a king, it should cost eight thousand."[3] "You are far from right," said the king, "for it cost me thirty thousand." On no less a scale peculation flourished in every branch of the government; inefficiency and dishonesty went hand in hand; an attempt to check these evils would have been regarded as both chimerical and cruel.

The perquisites which were enjoyed by those connected with the court were often curious in their character, and were usually satisfactory in their amount. Of many offices the duties were nominal and the legal compensation was slight, but by recognized usage the fortunate holders of those positions appropriated a liberal share of the waste of the court. The ladies of the queen's chamber were nominally paid one hundred and fifty livres a year, but they sold for their own use the candles which had once been lighted. This item, which would seem insignificant, yielded to them the very pretty sum of five thousand francs a year. So

[1] These figures are obtained approximately from the statistics given in Forbonnais, *Recherches sur les finances.* Necker's *Compte rendu, Maison du roi.*

[2] A Frenchman in Berlin in 1752, Voltaire, *Mém. pour servir.*

[3] *Mém. de Bezenval*, ii. 206.

great were the profits made on wax candles that a large number of officials participated in them; the candles unconsumed when the comedy was ended went to the *garde-meuble*, while various persons shared in the sale of those that remained when the king had finished his meals. We may be sure that the persons interested in such gains saw that the greatest possible number of candles were lighted, and that they were not allowed to burn too long. Every three years the linens and the laces of the queen were renewed in order that the lady of honor and the royal nurse might sell the supply on hand. When the dauphine died Mme. Brancas at once asserted her rights to all that pertained to her toilette, which brought no less than fifty thousand crowns; another lady's profits on her wardrobe were eighty-two thousand livres, and in all the perquisites of various members of the court on the dauphine's death can safely be reckoned at over a hundred thousand dollars.

The first gentleman of the chamber supplied the king with powder and pomade, and reaped great gains from his monopoly. The grand equerry had the job of furnishing the Swiss guards with their uniforms, and his profits were larger than those of the most fashionable tailor.

In modern days of vulgar democracy such practices would be called plain stealing, but they were recognized by usage, and similar abuses could be found in every branch of the French administration. It was a gigantic system of wastefulness in which all profited, and which no one sought to check. Even the captain of the hunt at Fontainebleau made no less than twenty thousand francs a year by selling rabbits; whatever amounts were realized by the sale of the king's prop

erty, it was rarely that any of the proceeds were allowed to find their way into the king's exchequer.[1] Indeed, these innumerable perquisites were bestowed by a benevolent monarch on courtiers who looked to him for support, in the same way that a gentleman gives his valet the old clothes which he would blush to sell.

The form of administration which had been perfected under Louis XIV. continued with little change until the Revolution. The chief authority was in the hands of secretaries of state, to each of whom was assigned an amount of work which required for its performance the greatest industry and the highest ability. The choice of the ministers was determined by the intrigues of the court and the caprice of the monarch, and, as a result, few men of capacity filled these positions during the eighteenth century. While Fleury was prime minister he exercised a certain supervision over his associates, but after his death unity of purpose was rarely found among the advisers of the king. As a rule, each secretary was jealous of his companions; his chief anxiety was lest any of them should obtain in large degree the confidence and favor of the sovereign. The man fortunate enough to be chosen as secretary was admitted to the intimacy of the king, he could enrich himself and his friends, he was the object of envy to his fellows; dismissal from office was the manifest mark of royal disapproval, a disgrace which few had sufficient philosophy to bear with equanimity. The minister was in little danger of overthrow from any public disfavor; whether he was loved or hated by his fellow citizens was not likely in any way to affect his tenure of office. But

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, ii. 369; iii. 300; vii. 383 *et pas.*; Taine, *L'Ancien Régime*, 87.

he was exposed to dangers of a different nature: the complaints of those who had the opportunity of whispering their discontent to the monarch when he was putting on his shirt or taking off his boots; the insinuations of his companions at the supper-table; most dangerous of all the ill will of her who, for the time being, possessed the royal affections, might any day bring the dreaded order to turn over the seals of office and retire to his château in the provinces. Naturally, therefore, the secretary sought to make friends of members of the court, to advise no measure which would interfere with their privileges, to oppose no act of benevolence which they might request from the king. Still more was it for his interest to enjoy the favor of the mistress, to assist her in every demand for money or rank, to consult her in the distribution of patronage, to ask her advice as to the policy of the state. The shameful influence exerted by the mistresses of Louis XV. in the government of France is the chief scandal of his reign, and had much to do with undermining the monarchical traditions of the French people. Men were made ministers of state because they could turn off a neat rhyme on the favorite's charms, and men were dismissed from office because they dared to oppose her wishes.

So firmly was the power of such women established under Louis XV. that it seemed an integral part of the system of government; in nations where this was not found, courtiers recognized a defect in the constitution. The young Count of Gisors, son of Marshal Belle Isle, visited England in 1754. It was not strange that he should have thought St. James hideous and the English court small and sombre when compared with that of Versailles, but another differ-

ence attracted his attention as he considered the relative positions of Mme. de Pompadour and the Countess of Yarmouth. "In every other monarchy," he writes, "the mistress of the king shares his power; here she only shares his impotence."[1]

Even though no woman's whim interfered, Louis was prone to make a capricious choice of his servants. His indolent and selfish nature was affected by trifles; though he was indifferent to the abilities of his ministers, he was critical as to their manners: he never recalled Chauvelin to his councils because his jokes, his familiarity, and his loud laughter were distasteful; he dismissed Amelot, the secretary for foreign affairs, because he could not endure his perpetual stuttering.[2]

The administration in France was highly centralized, and to superintendents was assigned the duty of regulating the affairs of the provinces in accordance with the principles adopted at Versailles. The extensive power vested in these officers has been an object of denunciation from Richelieu's day to ours, but as a whole it was probably in furtherance of good government. Certainly the power exercised by them was very large. "The kingdom of France," said Law, "is governed by thirty superintendents, and on them depends the misery or happiness of the provinces, their abundance or their sterility." Hardly an object of human interest was without their jurisdiction; the administration of justice, the finances of the city, the highways of the town, the apportionment of taxation, the dispersion of Huguenot assemblies, alike required the attention of the all-pervading superintendent. His

[1] *Journal of Count of Gisors*, February–April, 1754; cited by Rousset, *Vie du Comte de Gisors*.

[2] *Mém. d'Argenson*, ix. 58, 64.

action could be overruled by the authorities at Versailles, but little of this mass of detail found its way to the notice of a secretary whose mind was too closely fixed on the court to give much thought to the condition of the provinces.

Power as extensive as this was often abused; there were superintendents who were bigoted and inefficient and corrupt; but, on the whole, their work seems to have been as well done as was possible with any system that was then practicable. Many of the duties imposed upon them might wisely have been intrusted to local bodies, but in the political condition of France at that period an intelligent and effective system of local government was impossible, unless accompanied by a degree of political freedom which would at once have put an end to the old régime. The superintendents were always active and usually intelligent, and the extensive power vested in officials who were themselves dependent on the central government helped to unify the French people.

The administrations of such men as Aguesseau in Languedoc and Turgot at Limoges were long remembered for the benefits they wrought in the districts under their charge.

The influence of the city governments and of other local bodies was not sufficiently important to require any detailed notice. By various means they had been deprived of any independent power: the appointment of officials was largely in the hands of the king; their duties were nominal; the people had little voice in their selection, and little concern as to their conduct. In the early part of the eighteenth century there was no other section of the world where the theory of local government was so admirably developed as in New

England; there was no civilized country in which it was more torpid and unimportant than in the greater portion of France, and this fact alone will go far to account for the differences between the revolutions of 1776 and 1789.[1] In Languedoc, Brittany, and a few other districts, the ancient provincial states had escaped annihilation, but their power to regulate the amount contributed to the general government by those they represented, which had once been important, was now hardly more than a registration of the royal will. The provincial states, like the governors of the provinces, had the form of power, but not the reality. They might have furnished a nucleus for the development of legislative bodies, somewhat akin to the legislatures of the American States, but the tendency of political change in France was not in that direction; in the discussions of the eighteenth century there was little demand for any local subdivision of political action; the most ardent republican of the Convention was as eager an advocate of centralization as Richelieu or Louis XIV.; the provincial states, which were feeble at the beginning of the eighteenth century, passed out of existence at the close of it.

During the reign of Louis XV. the only check upon the authority of the king was found, not in any representative assemblage which could assert a right based on past tradition or on present expediency, but in the judicial bodies whose claim to exercise legislative action had little foundation in the past and was of little value in the present. The nobility of the robe

[1] For a somewhat fuller statement of the condition of the local bodies in France under Louis XIV., which was little changed under Louis XV., I would refer to *France under the Regency*, p. 304 *et seq.*

enjoyed privileges hardly inferior to those of the nobility of the sword; it was no better fitted to render important political service to the state. It is not strange, therefore, that the constant quarrels between the Parliament of Paris and Louis XV. served no useful purpose. A royal edict, in order to be enforced, had to be registered with the courts, but if this registration was refused, the king in his own person could hold a bed of justice and compel it. It is manifest, therefore, that though the parliament might remonstrate with the sovereign, it could not control his action; it could delay the registration of an edict, but it could not prevent it. Nor from the constitution of the body was it possible that it should ever become a fit organ for the expression of the popular will. We shall have occasion to relate frequent contests between the king and the courts during the reign of Louis XV. The cause espoused by the judges was usually popular with the people. But when later in the century there came a demand for popular institutions, and the overthrow of the privileges which formed so large a part of the old régime, it is not strange that the judges were soon arrayed in opposition to changes which would be fatal to their own position in the community. The growth of the French parliaments is interesting as a chapter in legal history, but it is not important as a part of the constitutional history of the French kingdom.

In considering the condition of France at the beginning of Louis XV.'s reign it is proper to give special attention to the position of the nobility, for politically as well as socially its influence was far greater than that of either the church or the third estate.

The French nobility was a large body; new mem-

bers were constantly added, and its limits were vaguely defined; it is difficult, therefore, to say with accuracy in what measure the administration of the country remained in its hands. It was the policy of Louis XIV. to restrict the influence of the great nobles, whose families traced their origin far back in French history, and whose ancestors had once ruled provinces almost as independent sovereigns. Secretaries of state were more often chosen from officials connected with the parliament, or from superintendents who had shown ability, than from nobles who bore names like those of Condé, or Rohan, or Bouillon. In this, as in every tradition of government, Louis XV. sought to follow in the footsteps of his ancestor. There were no families in France during the eighteenth century exercising a political influence to be compared with that of the Bedfords, or the Pelhams, or the Newcastles in England. But illustrious houses like the Condés or the Bouillons formed a small part of the French aristocracy. The parliamentary families should not be regarded as part of the third estate; they were not improperly called the nobility of the robe, inferior indeed to that of the sword, but still identified in interest with the aristocracy, rather than with the commonalty of France. Men who had sprung from modest origins, but had obtained the prizes of the state, became founders of new families, equal in wealth and in rank to those of more ancient lineage; the descendants of Colbert and Fouquet and Louvois mingled on no very unequal terms with the descendants of nobles who had conquered at Bouvines, or been defeated at Agincourt. Admitted into a privileged body, enjoying the rank, the titles, the immunities of an aristocracy, naturally they espoused its

interests and shared its prejudices. Centuries are not required to instill into the blood a lively conception of the difference between nobleman and commoner. The father of the famous Duke of St. Simon was a poor country gentleman elevated to the peerage by the caprice of his master, but his son could have been no more deeply imbued with aristocratic prejudices if he had traced his rank to Hugh Capet instead of to Louis XIII.

We can justly say that the administration of France under Louis XV. was largely in the hands of the aristocracy, and certainly the traditions of that body had a controlling influence on the policy of the country. Even though a secretary of state might belong to a parliamentary family, or came from still humbler stock, the courtiers, the officers of the army, those attached to the person of the king, belonged with few exceptions to the order of the nobility.

At this period nearly two hundred thousand persons formed the second estate, as the nobility was officially called; they were but one per cent. of the population of France, but they received a larger amount of consideration from the government and from the world than the other ninety-nine parts. To most readers of French history its interest still centres in the vision of a magnificent monarch, attended by dukes and marquises, resplendent in powdered hair, embroidered coats, and jeweled swords, and by ladies who were always charming, often beautiful, and sometimes virtuous. It is not a complete and a philosophical conception of the history of a great people, but it would be idle to disregard the importance of the court life under the old régime.

There was, however, a large class of the nobility

who were not found among the gorgeous butterflies that adorned Versailles; gentlemen who could show the quarterings necessary for entrance to any noble order, but who knew as little of Paris as many an English squire knew of London. These country gentry for the most part were reduced in fortune, and exercised a small influence in their districts. The want of money, the lack of some powerful friend who could procure for them a position at court, were generally the causes which kept them at home. Trade was forbidden, the practical qualities by which estates are made more valuable were not common among them, and the fortunes of many gentle families steadily decreased. Each son inherited the privileges and the traditions of his order, but his material inheritance was often sadly inadequate for the support of a gentleman, who could find no way of bettering his fortunes without derogating from his rank. He became "the high and mighty seigneur of a dovecot, a frog-pond, and a warren." A superintendent tells us that in his district, out of thousands of gentle birth, there were not thirteen who had incomes of twenty thousand francs. Scorning any occupation but the chase, they blushed to work and died of hunger.[1]

Thus reduced in fortune, they led a cramped and useless existence. The French gentlemen as a class took little part in the affairs of the community; few of them bore any resemblance to the country gentry who exerted so great and so beneficial an influence in England. They were indeed less apt to get fuddled drinking with the farmers at the tavern, but neither had they any taste for the useful work of the Quarter Sessions, nor that active and hearty coöperation in

[1] Rétif de la Bretonne, *La vie de mon père*, i. 146.

matters of local interest which make the squire the chief figure, and usually a popular figure, in every English hamlet.

The gentlemen who were debarred from the brilliant existence of the court cherished in no less degree the pride of their order. The duke who stood by the king at his dinner and was admitted into his bedchamber was no more tenacious of the deference due his rank than the country gentleman who lived in a dilapidated château on poorer fare than many a skilled mechanic, and who wandered over his scanty acres with a hungry dog at his heels and a rusty sword at his side. Voltaire was made a gentleman of the king's chamber, and the Chevalier de l'Huillière expressed the sentiments of his class when he wrote, "I am informed that the king has bestowed the office of gentleman of his chamber upon one Arouet, known as Voltaire. The king will not affront the nobility by releasing this fellow from furnishing proofs of his gentle birth, which he could only find on his mother's side, for on his father's he is a roturier. To do this would dishonor gentlemen of name, who have been noble from father to son from time immemorial."[1] The orthography and the grammar of this letter are lamentable, and those who were outraged that an office should be bestowed on one who could not show his sixteen quarterings were often as ignorant as they were proud. Even in 1789, in the cahiers prepared for the States General, we find numerous requests from country gentlemen for some mark — a cross or a ribbon — which should proclaim to the world that its wearers were of noble birth.[2]

[1] Fillon, *Lettres inédites de la Vendée*, 116, 7.

[2] Taine, *L'Ancien Régime*, 48.

Undoubtedly there were exceptions; there were nobles, like the father of the great Mirabeau, who were in no way connected with the court, and whose careers were active and useful. At the beginning of the Revolution the peasants of the Vendée remained constant to the principles espoused by the upper classes, and their devotion proves that in this district the gentlemen still retained their position as leaders of the community. Such cases were exceptional; as a rule, the provincial nobility were encased in a stupid pride, which kept them aloof from their neighbors of less degree; they showed no capacity for useful work or for any work; they possessed no hold over a community which they neither guided nor aided.[1]

If the life of some gentleman whom scanty fortune condemned to vegetate in the provinces was barren and dull, it was far otherwise with the great nobles. To an uncommon degree they had within their reach the objects of human desire; they possessed rank and wealth; they were free from the cares and necessities which cramp the existence of most; they received great benefits from the state, and were exempt from most of its burdens. Few lots would seem more enviable than that of the head of a great French family during the eighteenth century, living in a country which attracted the attention and excited the admiration of all Europe, forming part of a magnificent court, where the splendor of the king and the greatness of the country furnished innumerable opportunities for the acquisition of dignity and power and wealth.

[1] "Les seigneurs," said the Marquis of Mirabeau, speaking of the rest of the population, "ne leur sont plus bons à rien; il est tout simple qu'ils en soient oubliés comme ils les oublient."

Such an aristocracy naturally dazzled and delighted all beholders. The training of its members from childhood fitted them for intercourse with their fellows; they had tact and polish and good breeding. A lad of twelve could turn a neat compliment to a guest; a girl was drilled each hour of the day in the minutiæ of etiquette. "Be careful not to disturb your rouge, and not to tear your robe, and not to disarrange your headdress, and then amuse yourself," said a mother to a young girl going to a children's party.[1] They were drilled for a life of social display; the marquis of ten, in powdered hair and with a sword at his side, walked with as much dignity as the duke his father; his sister of twelve was versed in the use of the rouge-pot, and submitted herself to the arts of the hair-dresser with as resigned a grace as the duchess her mother. If a nobleman often grew up knowing very little else, at least he was taught good manners, and for the career before him this was by far the most useful accomplishment which he could acquire.

The social life of the nobility and the changes which the century produced will be discussed later. It is rather as a political element in the body politic that they will here be considered, and we are first impressed by the amount which they cost the state. Alike the feudal dues which remained as a relic of the feudal power vested in the nobility of a former age, and the heavy burden which their successors imposed upon the national treasury, increased the weight of taxation, and were a serious check upon the prosperity of the larger portion of the community.

Life at Versailles was costly, even though the king defrayed many of the expenses of those whom he

[1] Cited by Goncourt, *La femme au 18e siècle.*

regarded as his guests. The establishments of the great nobles were on a colossal scale, the servants were numerous, the cost of entertainment was large, and necessary expenses were swollen by shiftlessness. As a result, the nobility as a body were involved in debt; even though the revenues from their estates were swollen by pensions and emoluments received from the king, a large proportion were in a chronic state of insolvency. The Duke of St. Simon had an income of almost eighteen hundred thousand livres, yet his creditors had to be content with fifty cents on a dollar of their claims; Marshal Estrées left two million livres of debts; at twenty-six the Duke of Lauzun was already two millions in debt; M. de Chenonceaux lost seven hundred thousand francs at play in a single night. The Duke of Bourbon had an income of two million livres, and owed six millions when he died.[1] The country gentlemen were embarrassed because their receipts were so small, and the great nobles were bankrupt because their expenditures were so large.

Rarely did a nobleman give any attention to improving the value of his property, and to engage in business enterprises was unknown. Arthur Young said he could generally distinguish the estates of great nobles by their bad condition. "Whenever you stumble on a grand seigneur you are sure to find his property a desert." "I will wager," said a stranger, "that this inclosure belongs to the seigneur." "It does," replied the peasant. "I thought so," continued the traveler, "when I saw it was covered with briers and thorns."[2] The dilapidation of fortunes was sometimes repaired by marriages with the daughters of

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, iii. 123; iv. 445 *et pas.*

[2] Mirabeau, *Traité de la population*, i. 42.

bankers or government contractors, but such alliances were not as common as they are now, and the tendency of an extravagant class was to become an embarrassed class. Yet whatever was the condition of the hereditary estates, though rents were falling and mortgages were growing, a man of the world, as has been truly said, expected that there should be money in his pocket, a fine coat in his dressing-room, powdered valets in his antechamber, a gilded carriage standing at his door, and a choice dinner served upon his table.[1] In certain directions he was willing to disquiet himself in order to obtain the means for such an outlay, but the only source of supply to which he could resort was the liberality of the king and the treasury of the nation.

If a nobleman was in favor at court and was in financial distress, — and the two things frequently went together, — it was to the king that he turned for relief, nor was the prayer for aid often refused. The Prince of Conti was given a million and a half livres to pay his debts; the Countess of Polignac had four hundred thousand for the same purpose, and the list of similar benefactions would be endless.

If assistance was not granted directly from the treasury, it was often furnished by expedients for which the public at last had to pay. As the Prince of Carignan was in straits, he was allowed to keep a gambling-house in Paris, with the profits of which he might repair the waste of his fortune.

The Duke of Luynes tells us of the efforts of a person who wished to share in the profits made from the farm of taxes. At first he promised M. de la Trémoille fifty thousand crowns to secure him the

[1] Taine, *L'Ancien Régime*, 165.

position, but for some reason this negotiation fell through. At last he was promised the place upon condition of paying forty thousand crowns, with which to discharge a gambling-debt of the Duke of Richelieu.[1] It was necessary that the profits to be derived from the position should be sufficient to defray the bribes required to obtain it, and so they were. Each one of the associates connected with the farms received annually the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand livres, and in addition the gains of the association during one term of nine years were figured at fifty-four millions.[2]

The demands of the nobility for pecuniary aid were regarded as well founded; alike privileges and pensions and exemptions from taxation were based upon a claim of right, upon services rendered in the past for the support and defense of the monarchy, and which were supposed still to be rendered in the present. In the service of the king the members of the second estate, it was said, were ready to shed their blood; in times of peace they were his counselors, and in the advice of noblemen possessing the advantage of leisure, and raised above need, a wisdom and disinterestedness could be found not to be expected from those born to a humbler lot. It was just, therefore, that offices of profit and responsibility should be intrusted to those who were entitled to their gains and fitted for their duties. Such was the theory of the advantages of an aristocracy as a governing class, and it is necessary to study the history of France in the eighteenth century to see how far this conception was justified.

The embarrassed condition of the national finances

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, ii. 61. [2] *Ib.*, x. 166.

which was chronic under Louis XV. was not altogether due to excessive expenditure. Certainly there was great opportunity for retrenchment, yet the expenses of the government under the old régime were not greater than the country was able to bear; it is doubtful whether the monarchical establishment was any more costly than the democratic institutions by which it has been succeeded. Wars were more frequent in the last century than in this, but while they lasted longer they cost less, and the expense of the army in times of peace was small in comparison with the sums now expended by most European nations. Twenty million livres a year would perhaps represent the sums annually paid in pensions to the aristocracy. In addition to this there were the excessive amounts allowed to the holders of many offices; the Governor of Languedoc had a salary of one hundred and sixty thousand livres, the Governor of Burgundy received one hundred thousand, the position of grand master was worth as much; the list of lucrative offices was a long one. The amount spent upon the royal family was a yet more serious item. Aside from the civil list proper, the expenses of the monarch himself, were the increasing sums expended upon members of his family. While Louis XV.'s daughters were still little more than children, it was said that each of them cost the state a million annually, and a few years later the two brothers of Louis XVI. succeeded in squandering every year eight millions of the public moneys.

Such extravagance can justly be condemned, yet it is equaled by the salaries of an excessive number of minor officials in the present French government, and it is far exceeded by the pension list of the United States. It may, indeed, be said that the sums thus

expended in our own day benefit large numbers, while those paid out under the old régime profited only a small class; yet considered as a burden upon the national wealth, it is questionable if the cost of government absorbed any larger proportion of the resources of the governed.

It was not the amount taken by taxation so much as the apportionment of taxation which rendered its burden almost unbearable. If the condition of the lower classes was bad, and the finances of the government were involved, the explanation is to be found chiefly in the exemptions granted the privileged classes. The number of those who profited by such abuses was constantly increasing, and thus a larger proportion of the national wealth was withdrawn from its just burden of taxation. A courtier of Louis XIV. said that whenever his majesty created an office, the Lord created a fool who would purchase it. The purchaser was by no means a fool; the salaries allowed the holders of the countless useless offices created at this period usually amounted to at least a reasonable interest on the sum paid for the place, and the other advantages which resulted were often far more valuable than the yearly stipend received from the treasury. There were thousands of positions which secured to their holders a large degree of exemption from the burdens of taxation. The position of some petty civic official or of some useless court functionary might not seem specially enviable, but if it conferred upon him the rank of nobility, and thereby secured relief from the ordinary burdens of the state, the advantage to the incumbent was large, and in every case it was purchased at the expense of other taxpayers.

The nobility were by no means exempt from all forms of taxation, but where the law did not spare them altogether their social position secured a large degree of immunity. The Duke of Orleans said he saved three hundred thousand livres every year because the taxing officers grossly underestimated his property; the princes of the blood did not pay one twelfth of the amount for which they were justly liable; on an average, the assessment on the estates of gentlemen was probably not over one sixth of the sum which would have been levied on property of the same value in the hands of roturiers.[1]

At the beginning of Louis XV.'s reign the bourgeoisie filled a less important place than at its close. With the development of commerce resulted a growth of wealth which secured for its possessors an increasing influence in society and the state. Many of the fortunes accumulated would be regarded as considerable even in our days. Samuel Bernard, the great banker, was said to have left thirty millions; M. de Bellegarde, a farmer of taxes, had a fortune of eight millions, and the list of those whose wealth was reckoned by millions was not a small one. By the very fact of their riches such men were brought into intimate relations with the aristocracy, whose society they sought, and whose vices they imitated more easily than their virtues.

Bernard led a life of magnificent display; his table alone cost him one hundred and fifty thousand livres a year; his mistress was given a great estate; his sons squandered fortunes; his daughter married the Marquis of Mirepoix. Some blamed the marquis, writes a

[1] The evils resulting from an under-assessment of the property of nobles are often referred to by Turgot.

contemporary, for allying himself with a family so lacking in lustre, but he adds, "in these days nothing but money is considered." [1] Even in the courtly era of Louis XIV., Madame de Sévigné had written that the millions were always of good family. The lives of many of these parvenus, the most of whom gained their wealth in transactions with the state, were too often a poor reproduction of the reckless career of spendthrift nobles. Madame d'Epinay has described the routine of existence at her husband's, a man who, like many of his fellows, combined educated and artistic tastes with every folly of conduct. When he arose his valet hastened to assist in the toilette, two lackeys were on hand to receive his orders, and a secretary to attend to his correspondence. Then followed what seems a burlesque on the scenes which attended the king's rising: M. d'Epinay walked into his antechamber amid two rows of parasites and protégés, dealers and merchants, lackeys and beggars, and, alas! always a goodly assemblage of creditors, who danced attendance long before they were able to obtain their pay.[2] His father acquired wealth as a farmer of taxes, and the son inherited a fortune, and an office of which the gains were as large as they were unconscionable. No riches could keep pace with his prodigality, and he squandered his money on every device that could be suggested by dissipation and improvidence. With all this he was a polished and an agreeable man. He had a smattering of every useless accomplishment; he was a fair musician, and a bit of a poet; he had a taste for architecture and painting and cooking, and was a reasonably good carpenter; he

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, August, 1733.

[2] *Mém. Mme. d'Epinay*, 307.

ruined himself and his family with the utmost amiability. His relations with his wife are a curious and a melancholy picture of the social condition of the time, for he consulted her with frankness as to appropriate gifts for the actresses on whom he squandered countless thousands. At last his dissipation cost him his office, as it had exhausted his fortune; separated from his family, ruined in position, hopelessly bankrupt, he hummed and thrummed through life to the end, giving dainty little suppers, patronizing the stage, adoring actresses, with perfect affability, courtesy, and contentment.

It was not by such men that society could be changed for the better, yet as years went on the upper middle class assumed greater importance; the influence of commerce and literature became larger, while that of Versailles grew less. Before Louis's reign was ended, the public sought inspiration from houses at Paris where gathered philosophers and economists, rather than from the salons of an ancient aristocracy. But in the early part of the century the middle classes exerted little influence in the administration of the state.

To the most important class in the population the government gave least attention; upon the tillers of the soil the burden of taxation fell most heavily, and little heed was given to the amelioration of their lot. Yet no one can understand the course of French history without giving to the character of the French peasantry more study than it has often received. Among the national characteristics of the French, as they are generally conceived, are wit, frivolity, fickleness, a readiness for political change. The French peasants have few of the qualities which are assumed

to be those of the whole nation; they have been conservative, unwilling to deviate from the usages of the past, slow to adapt themselves to the needs of the future, untiring in their industry, often narrow in their intelligence, yet fond of gain, and eager to add sou by sou to their savings, and acre by acre to their little parcels of land. Among them neither wit nor intellectual brightness has found a fertile soil, but they have contributed to the nation's character a certain stubborn tenacity, for which it has not always received credit. It is from the innumerable petty hoards of a thrifty and often an avaricious peasantry that the money has been forthcoming which has saved France from financial ruin in the worst crises of her history. The country depends on a class whose strongest quality is an indomitable persistence, and this has enabled the French people to escape the overthrow with which they have so often been threatened.

The contrast between the upper classes and the peasantry in France has always been far more marked than between the corresponding orders in England. Broad as are the distinctions that result from differences in birth and education and wealth, yet there has always been much in common between an English nobleman and an English yeoman; through all the centuries of English history it is easy to see the characteristics which have bound together the estates of the realm. It has not been so in France; either in the eighteenth century or the centuries prior it is hard to find any point of resemblance between the peasant who labored in the fields and the gentleman who lived in the châteaux. There was no such difference in character and tendencies and tastes between the peer and the plowman in England as that which in France

seemed to draw an impassable line between Monsieur le Marquis and Jacques Bonhomme.

At the present time, one half of the population of France is occupied with the culture of the soil; the proportion was somewhat larger in the last century, and under Louis XV., of twenty million people, nearly fifteen millions belonged to the peasantry.[1] Not only were they the largest class, but they were by far the largest contributors to the national wealth. Even now the wealth of France is chiefly agricultural, and a century and a half ago French manufactories were comparatively small and the era of great industrial development had not begun. The French as a people have not been preëminent in commercial intelligence; they do not equal the English in business enterprise; they have had poor success in colonial development; the nation owes its prosperity chiefly to the unremitting toil given to a fertile soil, and to the unwearying thrift by which the small but steady gains of agriculture have been accumulated until they reached enormous proportions. The soil of France is rich, but in the culture of it more has been due to the indefatigable industry of the peasants than to the intelligence they displayed in their methods. More than a century before, Olivier de Serres, the most famous of French agricultural writers, had bidden his countrymen to cling to the plow of their ancestors, and to beware of innovations.[2]

[1] In 1792, Arthur Young estimated the urban population at six millions and the country population at twenty millions. *Travels in France*, 353. The latter has changed little in a century, being still about nineteen millions; the increase has been entirely in the cities.

[2] *Théâtre d'Agriculture.*

No advice was less needed. The French people do not take readily to economical novelties, nor have farmers in any nation been prompt to change the modes of culture which they learned from their sires, and the peasants have been the most conservative among Frenchmen, and the most averse to change among farmers. Arthur Young commented repeatedly on the backward condition of French agriculture. In Brittany, he said, husbandry had not further advanced than among the Hurons.[1]

In some districts the conditions were better, for the differences in intelligence and prosperity in different parts of the country were far greater than they are now. Yet if a peasant who lived in the days of Charlemagne could have revisited the scene of his labors in the early part of Louis XV.'s reign, he would have seen few notable changes in the manner in which the soil was cultivated; the great forests had somewhat diminished, the amount of improved land had increased with an increasing population, but he would have found his descendants plowing and planting and reaping in much the same way that he did himself.

Imperfect as were the means adopted, the results were large. Working with the poorest tools and, from the conservatism of his nature, slow to apply improved methods, even if he had been aware of their existence, yet by rising early and laboring late the peasant made his little piece of land yield a large increase.

In great measure this was due to the fact that he was working for himself and not for another. Peasant proprietorship in France is far from being a new

[1] *Travels in France*, 123.

thing, and the extent of it furnishes some criterion of the prosperity of different periods. A considerable portion of the soil belonged to peasant owners as far back as the thirteenth century, and complaints were frequent of the extent to which the land was subdivided. At the time of the Revolution, Arthur Young thought that over one half of the soil was in the possession of small proprietors. This estimate was too high. About one third of French soil is now owned by the peasantry, that is, by men whose holdings are less than twenty acres, and over three million five hundred thousand proprietors cultivate their own land.[1] There has been some increase in peasant proprietorship since the downfall of the old régime, although this has been less than is supposed; in the early half of the eighteenth century, the peasantry undoubtedly owned one fifth of all the soil of France, and they owned more than one fifth of that which was actually cultivated.[2] The great forests, the vast tracts of waste land, belonged to the government or to large owners, and probably almost one third of the land on which crops were raised was property of the men who tilled it.[3] The wealth drawn from the soil was vastly increased by the number of small proprietors. A contemporary, who was himself a nobleman, estimated that on an average the land owned by the peasantry was four times as productive as that owned by the nobility.[4] "The magic of property turns sand to

[1] *Enquête agricole*, 1882.

[2] Lavergne, *Economie rurale*, 49.

[3] The Vicomte d'Avenel, in his *Histoire économique*, thinks that the subdivision of land in 1789 was about the same proportionally as at present, but the amount under cultivation is now much larger. (Page 287.)

[4] Argenson, *Considérations sur le gouvernement de France.*

gold," Young wrote, as he saw the comfortable little houses standing on the sandy soil of French Flanders.

Yet the result of unremitting toil was generally poverty, and sometimes sharp distress, and of this the explanation must be found in that fertile source of human woe, bad government.

If the condition of the peasantry was poor, the chief cause for this was the undue weight of taxation. The total amount raised for the needs of the government did not, perhaps, consume a larger proportion of the national income under Louis XV. than under the present French republic, but, as a result of inequalities in the imposition, the burden fell more heavily upon the lower classes than it now falls upon any class. The cost of collecting the national revenue does not now exceed five per cent.; in Louis XV.'s reign, between the profits made by the farmers to whom taxes were let and the expenses to which taxpayers were constantly subjected in the enforcement of collection, it is not perhaps an overestimate to say that the amount taken from the people exceeded by fifty per cent. the amount received by the government.[1] The change that is produced by an efficient administration was strikingly illustrated when the system of French government was reorganized under Napoleon. Six thousand competent officials did well the work which had been done ill by two hundred thousand collectors; the receipts of the government doubled, and the taxpayers were better off; a few years showed the enormous difference to the public

[1] Letrosne, *Administration des finances*, 1789, estimated that the king did not receive over one half of what the nation paid; that the gabelle took one hundred million livres from the people, and yielded only forty-five million to the government, and other taxes yielded no more in proportion.

between a vigorous and intelligent administration and the abuses and inefficiency of the old régime.[1]

In the eighteenth century, while a large part of the national wealth was exempt in whole or in part from public burdens, there was no tax from which the peasant was free; upon him fell the taille, the capitation, the additional percentages for purposes of war, and the varied impositions which together constituted the direct taxation. So severe were they that they often operated as a check on accumulations. Rousseau relates an incident that shows how an appearance of squalor and need was preserved, lest the suspicion of prosperity should invite a heavier burden of taxation. He stopped at a peasant's house and asked for dinner. At first his host put before him only barley bread and skimmed milk, and said this was all he had; but, convinced at last that his visitor was not a government spy, the peasant opened his larder, produced some ham, with good wheat bread, an omelet, and a bottle of wine, and they dined well. He concealed his abundance, so he told his guest, on account of the taille, for he would be ruined by taxation if the officials did not suppose that he was dying of hunger.[2] His fears were not ill founded, for any appearances of well-being were sure to result in an increase of the taille. An officer told Argenson that in the district where he lived the taxes ought to be increased because the peasants were fatter than elsewhere; he had seen chickens' feathers scattered about their doors, which showed that they lived well and could pay more to the state.[3]

[1] These changes are well summed up in Taine, *Le Régime moderne.*

[2] *Œuvres de Rousseau*, xvi. 282.

[3] *Journal*, September, 1751.

It is probable that of every hundred francs earned by the peasant almost one half was taken for the needs of the fisc; the king's share in the crop, said Turgot, was as large as the owner's, and in addition to this were the feudal and religious imposts to which the land was subject.[1] Nominally the church took a tenth, but practically the amount collected by it was considerably less; the imposition of tithes was attended with some degree of leniency; payments were often made in kind, and it may be fairly estimated that the tithe on an average did not take more than seven per cent. of the produce of the soil.[2] It is more difficult to ascertain the amount collected by the innumerable feudal dues; while some of these were severe, many were exceedingly light, and throughout the century the old seigneurial impositions tended to fall into desuetude. Yet much more than one half of the amount earned by the peasant was used to discharge the demands made upon him by the government, the church, and the nobleman to whose feudal rights his parcel of land was subject.[3] The burden of taxation

[1] Turgot said that at Limoges, when he was superintendent, the taxes amounted to a little over one half of the product of a peasant's piece of land, but in some districts, as for instance at Saintonge, he insisted the taxes did not exceed twenty-four per cent., and on the whole he estimated the portion taken by the fisc at one third. *Avis sur l'imposition de la taille.* He probably underestimated the amount of taxation in other districts in his endeavor to obtain some alleviation for his own people.

[2] Lavergne, *Economie rurale de la France*, estimates that in 1789 the tithes did not amount to over five per cent. of the net product.

[3] Taine says over 81 per cent. of the product of a peasant's land was absorbed by imposts of all kinds, but his estimate is too high; existence could not have been supported from one fifth of the crop.

upon the French peasant under the old régime was probably over three times as heavy as it is at present, and as a result, even in times of prosperity, his lot was hard.

When the margin for subsistence was so small, it is manifest that a failure of the crop was sure to be attended by serious results. Such failures were not infrequent, and their effects were aggravated by the restraints upon the movement of grain which continued in force until late in the century. It is in these periods that we read accounts of hideous misery among large classes of men. In Paris indeed, by the constant efforts of the government, the price of bread was kept within some bounds; the capital received the same attention that Rome did under the emperors; even at large cost to the state, food was obtained for the metropolis at prices which avoided the peril of serious discontent among a swarming population.

The remote provinces received no such fatherly care when the crop was insufficient; not only were there no large charities which could relieve distress, but the restraints on the shipment of grain from more fortunate sections increased the danger of actual starvation. "More Frenchmen have died of want within two years," Argenson wrote in 1740, at a season when the crops had been deficient, "than were killed in all the wars of Louis XIV."[1] Doubtless this was a gross exaggeration, but there are many accounts which tell of the sufferings of the peasantry at such periods. Massillon writes from Auvergne, also in 1740, "The people of our country live in misery, they have neither furniture nor beds; during part of the year the most of them have no nourishment, except bread made of

[1] *Mém. d'Argenson*, iii. 92.

oats and barley, and even this they must snatch from their own mouths and those of their children in order to pay the taxes. . . . I see these unseemly sights every year. . . . The negroes of our islands are happier."

Even when an average crop relieved the danger of actual starvation, travelers tell us of the spectacles of misery that met them in many parts of the land. The houses of the peasantry were little better than huts, small, filthy, often without windows; the inmates were clothed in rags, barefooted, haggard, unwashed, ignorant, and miserable.

Such was not always their condition. Excessive impositions were the chief cause of the peasant's misery, and where those were lightened his lot was often one of comparative comfort. In the irregularities of the French system, while most of the peasantry were overtaxed, some escaped any excessive burden. In the southern provinces, and especially in Languedoc, they enjoyed a considerable measure of prosperity. A larger degree of local self-government, a partial exemption from the financial and commercial system in which the rest of the country was involved, secured for them an amount of well-being far exceeding that of most of the French people. "In Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiny," writes Argenson during the worst of the famine of 1740, "there is an abundance of everything. . . . Commerce is free, and wheat is never lacking."[1] Later in the century, Arthur Young tells us of finding filth, misery, and poverty in one district, while in another the houses were neat, the peasants were well fed, and the signs of well-being were manifest. Unfortunately, in the greater part of France the condition of the peasantry was bad, the

[1] *Argenson*, November, 1740.

instances of prosperity were the exceptions and not the rule. In Berri, Young writes that he found the husbandry poor and the people miserable; we may be sure their condition was no better fifty years earlier; in Orleans, the fields were scenes of pitiable management, as the houses were scenes of extreme misery; Poitou was poor and unimproved; in Brittany, there was hideous wretchedness, he found there only privileges and poverty. "One third of what I have seen of this province," he writes, "seems uncultivated, and nearly all of it is plunged in misery." In Limousin, said Turgot, after the payment of taxes there remained not over thirty livres for each person with which to provide food and clothing and shelter. Even in relative value this sum would be less than twenty dollars now, and it seems incredible that on so beggarly a pittance life could be sustained. It is not strange that he adds, "Agriculture, as it is practiced by our peasantry, is like life in the galleys."

If starvation had been the ordinary lot of the French peasants, the race would have become extinct; on the contrary, they increased in numbers during the eighteenth century, slowly during the first half and with somewhat greater rapidity in the forty years preceding the Revolution. Notwithstanding unfair taxation and imperfect culture of the soil, as a result of laborious industry their condition improved. Walpole, traveling through France from Boulogne to Paris in 1765, writes, "I find this country wonderfully enriched since I saw it four-and-twenty years ago. Boulogne is grown quite a snug, plump town, with a number of new houses. The worst villages are tight, and wooden shoes have disappeared." Improvement, even in the early part of the century, is indicated by

another sure criterion, a rise in the price of land. Increased activity in business followed the reforms in the currency of 1726, and an enhancement in the value of farms seems to have attended it. In 1726, the average price of agricultural land was estimated at twenty-five dollars an acre; by 1750, this had risen to thirty-five dollars.[1]

Notwithstanding the burden of taxation and the pressure of need, the peasantry during all the century continued to increase its holdings of the soil. Small as were the earnings of peasant proprietors, if, by means of the most rigorous economy, anything remained at the end of the year, it was put one side, and the only thing that would open the box containing their hoards was the possibility of acquiring another bit of land. A thirst, not for gold, but for land, has been characteristic of the French peasant as far back as his history can be traced, and opportunities were not wanting for new purchases. A large proportion of the nobility were non-residents, their land yielded them little, and ownership did not of itself bring the social influence which had so important an effect on the holding of land in England. The French nobleman was at court, he was in debt, and he received small returns from his estates in the provinces. It is evident, therefore, that it was for the interest of the gentleman to sell, and the peasant was usually the only purchaser. Thus, little by little, an acre here and an acre there, the slow process of accumulation by the peasantry went on, and it went on with as much rapidity in the eighteenth century as at any era of the past.

[1] These figures are derived from the reports of sales given in Avenel, *Histoire économique*, p. 388.

CHAPTER II.

THE MINISTRY OF THE DUKE OF BOURBON.

The death of the Duke of Orleans left vacant the position of prime minister. Louis XV. was a boy of thirteen; though legally of age, he was not old enough to perform the duties of his office, and the successor of Orleans would be the actual ruler of the kingdom. Young as Louis was, it was by his choice that the minister must be designated, but the desires of the sovereign were controlled by a man who had succeeded in obtaining, to an unusual degree, his affection and his confidence; the royal scholar listened with the trustfulness of youth to the counsels of the preceptor, who was to be known in history as Cardinal Fleury. Like many of the Catholic clergy who attained prominence and power, Fleury came from humble stock.[1] His father was a receiver of taxes, and the son gained his education at the cost of the privations which are the lot of needy students.[2] He chose the church as his profession, and as a priest his conduct was decorous, moral, and charitable. But he was not a man of fervent religious character; always a reputable priest, his interests were in the world and not in the church.

He possessed many qualities which are of value for

[1] Duclos says that he belonged to an ancient and noble family, but the pedigrees invented for those who achieve greatness are subject to suspicion.

[2] St. Simon, ii. 148.

worldly advancement. His person was handsome, his manners combined dignity with unfailing affability, he was full of tact and free from greed; he made many friends and few enemies. Such a man rarely lacks patrons. The favor of Cardinal Bonzi obtained for him a position as one of the queen's almoners, and after her death he was appointed almoner of Louis XIV.; he became an inmate of the court, and was received as a welcome member of society. A well-mannered abbé, who was always agreeable and never indecorous, could reasonably expect to be made a bishop. Louis XIV., it is said, regarded the abbé as better fitted for life at court than for the charge of souls, but, at the intercession of Cardinal Noailles, Fleury was chosen as bishop of Frejus, a small and unimportant diocese in the south of France.[1] He did not incur the reproach of becoming a non-resident; for sixteen years he dwelt among his flock, performing his episcopal duties with great propriety and with little zeal. An unimportant see might well have satisfied the ambition of a man of moderate parts and cautious character, but Fleury retained his taste for the court and wearied of the life of a country bishop. In 1715, when he was past sixty, he resigned his post, and soon afterward he was named by Louis XIV.'s will as preceptor of Louis XV., who was then a child of five. The position was peculiarly

[1] Madame de Maintenon, writing to Noailles in 1699, says: "M. l'abbé de Fleury n'étoit pas lui seul un personnage à être sitôt évêque." *Cor. gén.*, iv. 297. St. Simon, ii. 143, attributes his promotion to the same cause, and he was usually well informed. He reports that the king said to Noailles, "I do this with regret, and you will repent of your choice," which is quite probable. The prophecy was verified, for in the conflict over the Unigenitus Fleury was always opposed to Noailles.

adapted to him; he soon gained the confidence of his pupil, and in time this made him the chief man in France, with an authority as absolute as that of Richelieu or Mazarin.

The choice of Fleury as preceptor seems to have been judicious, and the influence which he long possessed was on the whole wisely exercised. Fleury was not a man to instill heroic views into his pupil's mind, but Louis was not a man who could have imbibed them. The king was fairly well educated, and the defects of his character, which made the later part of his reign a blot on French history, could have been corrected by no instructor.

The amiability and mildness of Fleury's character soon aroused a warm personal affection in his pupil; if Louis lived, it was plain that the affable preceptor was not a person to be disregarded. He manifested, however, little desire for advancement; he had led a tranquil life, and it did not seem probable that when approaching seventy he would develop a lust for power or place. Although he seemed unambitious, yet he realized the advantages of his position, and was allured by no dignity which would interfere with his personal relations with the king. In 1721, the Duke of Orleans offered him the archbishopric of Rheims. This was among the great prizes of the French church; the Archbishop of Rheims was one of the ecclesiastical peers of the realm; by him the king was consecrated; he enjoyed the income of a farmer general and the dignity of a prince. Yet no solicitation could induce Fleury to accept a position which might loosen his hold upon his pupil's affections. His friends suggested that he should confide the duties of the office to a vicar and content himself with receiving its rev-

enues, but Fleury was not greedy for money, and he knew the advantages of a reputation for propriety of conduct; more sincerely than is common he persisted in declaring, "Nolo episcopari."[1] When he was living in his former diocese, it is said that he once signed a letter, "Fleury, by divine wrath, bishop of Frejus."[2] It is certain that he had lost his taste for bishoprics.

The sudden death of the Duke of Orleans left the way open for Fleury; he had but to say the word and be declared the prime minister of France. He was now a man of seventy, and at that age few are willing to postpone the gratification of their ambition to an indefinite future. Whether from timidity or from hesitation, the word was not spoken.

If Fleury was uncertain, there was an aspirant who never hesitated to ask for what he wanted. The Duke of Bourbon was the head of the great House of Condé, and he inherited qualities which that family had often displayed since they deserted the faith and the heroic practices of their ancestors a century before. The duke combined the greed of his grandfather with the violent ambition of his great-grandfather; though he was a young man during the regency of Orleans, he had been persistent, and successful in demanding office and favor. He reaped fabulous gains from the operations of Law; he asked enormous advantages in return for the protection he extended, and the unfortunate adventurer was not in position to say no to so powerful a nobleman. It was reported that Bourbon had carried off many millions in gold

[1] *Mém. de St. Simon*, xvii. 274–280.

[2] This is stated by Voltaire, but like most historical anecdotes, it is probably incorrect.

from the spoils of Law's bank and the Mississippi Company; the government compelled some humbler speculators to disgorge their gains, but no one ventured to disturb the head of the House of Condé.

It was in the evening of December 2, 1723, that Orleans was suddenly stricken with apoplexy. The Duke of Bourbon was then at Versailles; the moment he heard the news he waited upon the king, and demanded the position of prime minister. Whether Fleury was too modest to ask this great office for himself, or whether he feared to offend a man of Bourbon's rank and violent character, he at once declared that his majesty could do no better than charge the duke with the burden of his affairs. The young king turned to his preceptor and nodded his head, without saying a word, and thus the appointment was made.[1]

The Duke of Bourbon was thirty-one years of age when he became prime minister. Few men were less fitted for the duties of such a place; he was without political capacity or political experience, and his brief ministry was characterized by corruption, bad judgment, and bigotry. The only principles which actuated him on assuming office were a strong resolve to get what he could for himself, and an equally strong resolve that the family of Orleans should get nothing. The duke had a fanatical hatred for any one who bore the name of Orleans; the regent had tried to satisfy in some degree the incessant and insatiable demands of his cousin, but the effort was not successful; much as Bourbon had received, he always wanted more.

[1] St. Simon, xix. 201, 202. St. Simon says that Fleury had agreed to recommend Bourbon for prime minister if Orleans died.

Now that he was himself in power, the fact that any measure had obtained the regent's approval made his successor desirous for its repeal, and he was haunted by a constant fear lest the new Duke of Orleans should obtain greater prominence than himself in the councils of the king. There was little reason to be disquieted on this score. The regent's son possessed neither the vices nor the virtues of his father, and he had inherited none of his abilities. Beginning life amid the dissipation of the Palais Royal, he ended his days amid the austerities of the abbey of Sainte Genevieve, but he was so unfortunately constituted that in him even virtue became grotesque; the son of the regent and the grandfather of Philippe Egalité proved the uncertainty of heredity by giving his time to writing treatises against the theatre, in the intervals of studies on the theological works of Theodore of Mopsuestia; although his income exceeded three million francs, he slept on a straw pallet, fasted with severity, went without fires on cold winter days, and made his fellow monks miserable by the rigorous discipline on which he insisted. Such practices killed him at exactly the same age that debauchery closed the career of his father.[1] Bourbon was not a man of ability, but he had little trouble in pushing his pious cousin out of his path.

The duke was controlled by another passion stronger even than his jealousy of Orleans, and that was his affection for Mme. de Prie. She was a woman well fitted to please; her conversation was witty and agreeable; she had read much; her memory was tenacious; her beauty was set off by a charming air of modesty and reserve. Never were appearances more deceptive: no

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, v. 156 *et pas.*; *Mém. d'Argenson*, iii. 402.

woman regarded virtue less; she was violent in her hates; she was selfish and greedy and false. "The Duke of Bourbon's mistress," wrote Bolingbroke, "is attached to him by no inclination, and is at once the most corrupt and ambitious jade alive."[1]

Hardly had the duke assumed his office, when the attention of the community was attracted by a new vagary of the Bourbon prince, to place whom on the Spanish throne Louis XIV. involved France in years of war. Superstition constantly gained a stronger hold on the cloudy and enfeebled mind of Philip V., and now he suddenly announced his intention to abdicate. This scheme had long been in his mind.[2] It was not strange that Philip himself should desire a life of religious retirement, in the belief that thereby he could increase his chance for salvation, but his wife was an ambitious woman, who cared for temporal as well as spiritual kingdoms. She had long ruled her husband with an authority divided only with his confessor, and she had no taste for abdications; but increasing fear of hell so absorbed Philip's mind that at last Elizabeth's influence could no longer prevail against it.[3] In 1720, he succeeded in having her join him in a written promise that they would both retire from the world by All Saints' Day, 1723. Doubtless the queen thought that if she could postpone the evil day for three years, events would arise to change the king's mind, but she underestimated his tenacity of purpose. To prepare for his retirement he built the

[1] Letter of January 12, 1724.

[2] "Every day," wrote an ambassador, "he has been growing more mistrustful, more timorous, and more scrupulous." *Aff. Etr.*, 330, 289.

[3] *Ib., pas.*

magnificent palace of San Ildefonso, at the little village of Balsaim, near the gloomy Escurial of Philip II., and there he sought to surround himself with a splendor which should remind him of the glories of Versailles. His retreat was somewhat delayed, probably at his wife's solicitations, but at last he would delay no longer. In January, 1724, Philip surprised his council by announcing that, after years of reflection on the miseries of life, he had resolved to abdicate his throne in order to devote himself to the service of God and labor at the great work of his own salvation.[1] He addressed a letter to his son, bidding him to govern wisely, to cultivate a special devotion for the Holy Virgin, and to sustain the tribunal of the Inquisition, that rampart of the faith which had preserved the purity of religion in Spain and saved her from the heresies which ravaged other lands.[2] Having thus displayed the measure of his statesmanship, this infirm representative of the Bourbon family retired to seclusion amid the beauties of San Ildefonso, there to make his salvation sure.[3]

He was succeeded by his son Louis, a prince who showed no signs of possessing any greater measure of ability than his father. His reign was brief, and seven months after his father's abdication the young

[1] *Archives d'Alcala.*

[2] *Ib.*

[3] Coxe, in his *Spain under the Bourbons*, advanced the theory that Philip's abdication was intended to make it easier for him to succeed to the French throne, in the not improbable event of Louis XV.'s death. This theory cannot be adopted in view of the documents which are now open to examination. Philip always intended to claim the French throne if his nephew died, but his abdication was due to the morbid piety of a weak mind, and not to the counsels of ambition.

king was carried off by smallpox. A younger brother should now have succeeded to the throne, but Elizabeth was resolved that she would no longer be kept from the enjoyment of power by the sickly piety of her husband. Philip himself seems to have wearied of a life of retirement, and was not averse to resuming the crown, but he was now involved in new fears. He had promised God to abdicate; could he leave his retreat and return to the world without incurring fresh danger of perdition? His confessor was consulted and, to the dismay of Elizabeth, he decided that the king would be guilty of grievous sin if he violated his promise. "You are a rascal," cried the Italian nurse, who was a great personage in this strange royal family, to the confessor who had thus interfered with the queen's projects. "I would do the king good service if I ran a dagger in you." The French still fancied that it was for their interest to keep the grandson of Louis XIV. on the throne, and Marshal Tessé sought to counteract the effect produced on the king by the scruples of the confessor. At first he was unsuccessful. "I don't want to be damned," said Philip to the marshal; "they may do what they please with my kingdom, but I am going to save my soul."[1] The queen now conceived the happy device of consulting the papal nuncio. More worldly wise than the confessor, he advised Philip that he could resume the crown and incur no risk of hell fire, and the monarch allowed himself to be persuaded. For twenty-two years more he remained on the Spanish throne, but he still clung to the idea of abdication; at times his hypochondriacal fancies were especially strong, and in his efforts to carry his pur-

[1] For all this, see correspondence of Tessé, *Aff. Etr.*, 1724.

pose into effect he showed the cunning which is often found in persons of infirm mind. On one occasion when the queen had left him for a moment, he hastily signed a new abdication, and had it conveyed surreptitiously from his room. She learned of this, and succeeded in recapturing the fatal paper before it was too late. At last she induced her husband to take an oath that he would sign no more abdications; when at times he was especially fearful of incurring damnation by remaining a king, she could threaten him with the same danger if he violated his oath. By such devices he was kept on the throne until his death, but it was Elizabeth of Parma, and not Philip of France, who controlled the destinies of Spain.

Bourbon had been anxious that Philip should return to the throne, but actuated by his own ambition, or by the disappointed vanity of his mistress, the duke now decided on a step which caused Spain to abandon the alliance of France for that of Austria.

In 1721, it had been agreed that Louis XV. should marry his kinswoman, the Spanish infanta, and a daughter of Philip V. She was then a child of three, but she was sent to Paris with much parade, there to receive a French education, and await the proper age for the solemnization of the nuptials. Three years had passed since then; to violate this agreement and send the princess back to her parents was to affront them in the sight of all Europe, and to incur the utmost ill will of the Spanish king; but the Duke of Bourbon decided upon this step for reasons personal to himself. The infanta was only six years old, and a long time must still elapse before the marriage could be consummated; should Louis die, leaving no son, the heir to the throne, as by law

established, was the Duke of Orleans, the person whom Bourbon most envied and hated. Moreover the Spanish alliance had been a measure of the regent; the future queen would not owe her elevation to Bourbon, and Spain would have no interest in his retention of office. He wished to choose a wife for the king upon whose gratitude he could rely; a queen with an amiable character, a pliant disposition, and a grateful heart would insure a continuance of favor to the duke and his mistress.

He accordingly laid before the council the dangers which France might incur if Louis remained unmarried, and advised the immediate choice of a bride of mature years. No one ventured to oppose the wish of the prime minister. Fleury contented himself with a mild opposition, and the young king, who was not yet fifteen, was perfectly indifferent on the subject. The infanta was returned to Spain, and her father was informed that the desire of all good Frenchmen for a dauphin with all possible haste compelled Louis to select another person for his wife. Diplomatic relations between the countries were broken off, but Philip did not allow his pique to lead him to any more violent measures.[1]

It was easy to find some one willing to be queen of France, and Louis was ready to accept any one suggested by his advisers, but Bourbon and Mme. de

[1] The Duke of Bourbon asked Philip to make the husband of Mme. de Prie a grandee, a title which would have descended to a child Bourbon had by her. (See his letter to Tessé.) If this request had been granted, the infanta would probably not have been sent away. "'This one-eyed scoundrel,' said Philip's wife, with her usual vigor, 'has sent back our daughter because the king would not create the husband of his harlot a grandee of Spain.'" Letter of Stanhope.

Prie were more difficult to please. A list was prepared, upon which appeared the names of one hundred princesses, with a statement of their physical, mental, and moral qualities.[1] Bourbon summarily ran his pen through eighty-three of the names, as out of the question, and among those rejected was the one who finally obtained the prize. Of the seventeen that were deemed worthy of discussion, the most eligible was the Princess Elizabeth of Russia, the daughter of Peter the Great and the future empress of that country. Her mother, Catherine I., undismayed by the prospect of ninety-nine competitors, declared that in personal charms and in the political advantages which she could offer, her daughter outranked them all. In part, certainly, her opinion was correct. Russian princesses did not yet stand on the same footing with those of Austria or Spain; the marriage of one of them with the king of France would have signalized the reception of Russia among the civilized states of the west, and the choice of Elizabeth would have secured for France the active support of her country during half a century. Catherine offered to make a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, and to exert the influence of Russia for the choice of a French prince as king of Poland, if her daughter could become queen of France. The French ambassador at St. Petersburg urged the wisdom of this choice, not only on political, but on personal grounds. "In Russia," he wrote, "it is an established maxim, that all women, from princesses to bourgeoises, have a blind submission to the wishes of their husbands."[2]

[1] *Aff. Etr. Fr.*, 314.

[2] Letter of Campredon, April 13, 1725. All the correspondence in reference to the proposed Russian alliance is found in

But this match was not to Bourbon's taste, and he gave little heed to the advantages it might bring to France, if it would not advance his own interests. The low birth of the mother of the Princess Elizabeth, he wrote, must be regarded as an obstacle to her choice, and instead of her, he recommended one of his own sisters. As to one of them, the brother admitted that something might be said against her figure, but the other combined virtue, wisdom, and grace.[1] Notwithstanding her attractions, this alliance met with opposition. Fleury was not in favor of it.[2] It is probable also that Mme. de Prie saw no advantage to herself in making a queen of Bourbon's sister, and the voice of his mistress overcame his fraternal zeal. The plan was abandoned, and the throne of France was offered to a daughter of George I., if she would consent to become a Catholic.[3] If George had been simply Elector of Hanover, such a condition would have met with no opposition. Even when the choice of a faith was not postponed until the choice of a husband, the religion of a daughter of a German prince was rarely allowed to stand in the way of her advancement. But George was on the throne of England as the representative of Protestantism. All that kept the Stuart pretender in exile was his Catholicism; if the English people had not regarded the Roman church with fear and aversion, an ignorant and licentious Hanoverian prince would not have been

his letters at the *Aff. Etr., Cor. de Russie.* The subject is well treated by Vandal, *Louis XV. et Elisabeth de Russie.*

[1] Rapport du duc de Bourbon au roi, *Aff. Etr. Fr.*, 314.

[2] *Procès verbal, Arch. Nat.;* Walpole to Newcastle, March 13, 1725.

[3] *Aff. Etr. Angleterre*, 1725, 350.

their king; it was impossible for his advisers to shock the Protestant feeling of the country by allowing his daughter to embrace the errors of papacy, and the proposition was politely declined.

In this dilemma Bourbon, acting under the advice of Mme. de Prie, suddenly decided upon the princess who seemed the most unlikely choice of all those whose names had been suggested. Stanislaus Leszczynski was a Polish nobleman who, by the favor of Charles XII., was elected to the throne of Poland. The defeat of Charles at Pultowa involved the overthrow of his protégé. Stanislaus fled from his native country, after five years' experience in royalty, and some time later he found refuge and a small pension in France. There the dethroned king lived in a very modest way, given to piety, and chiefly interested in finding an eligible husband for his only daughter. The child of a dethroned king of Poland, living on the charity of a friendly power, was not a matrimonial prize. Her father contemplated marrying her to a French marquis, and was in despair when the son of a German margrave declined to fulfill his engagement. It was understood that the Duke of Bourbon was to remarry, and the hand of the princess was offered to him. He showed no alacrity in accepting it, but Mme. de Prie decided that the princess who had sought in vain so many inferior alliances was the person to select as the wife of Louis XV. himself. Her character was known to be mild and tractable; she would owe a lifelong gratitude to those who had elevated her from a lot of obscurity and almost of need to the most brilliant position in Europe. Accordingly a messenger was sent with a demand, in the name of the king of France, for the hand of the

Princess Marie Leszczynski. If an angel had appeared at the dilapidated château of the exiled king, he would have occasioned no more surprise, and have been received with no more delight. When the extraordinary news was announced, father, mother, and daughter fell at once on their knees, and thanked God for his great and unspeakable mercies.

The prospect seemed too good to be true, and the letters of Stanislaus show a nervous apprehension lest this vision of felicity should prove a dream. But Bourbon and Mme. de Prie persevered in their project, and Louis regarded the matter with indifference. A special messenger had been sent to investigate the merits and demerits of eligible princesses, and his report on Marie Leszczynski was highly favorable. Her nose, said the faithful agent, was long, but it was not large, nor red, nor hooked, while her complexion was so beautiful that fresh water was the only paint it required; the princess rose at seven and read books of devotion and history; at noon she dined simply; and the afternoon she spent with her mother and grandmother, engaged in needlework and in making altar ornaments which she gave to churches.[1] Such a person would seem an ideal wife for a ritualistic clergyman, but she was chosen to be a queen.

This sudden grandeur had its inconveniences. The Duke of Antin was sent to make formal demand for the hand of the princess, and he came accompanied by one hundred and fifty guards and ten carriages, each drawn by eight horses, while Stanislaus found his few Polish followers quite inadequate to maintain the dignity required in the father of a future queen; he had to hire carriages for the state pro-

[1] *Aff. Etr. Fr.*, 314.

cessions, and was in great straits to borrow twelve thousand livres with which to pay his expenses.[1] At last the princess was married at the cathedral of Strasburg, and she met with an enthusiastic reception from her new subjects as she traveled to Paris. She described, with some humor, the endless allegorical displays which greeted her. "I am constantly metamorphosed: now I am fairer than the Graces, and then I have the virtues of the angels; yesterday I was the marvel of the world, to-day I am a star that sheds benign influences."[2]

Her journey would have been more comfortable with fewer fêtes and better roads. The weather was rainy, and in those days no royal pomp could overcome the miseries of travel in bad weather. The queen's carriage stuck in the mud, and it needed thirty horses to pull it out. Marie and her suite were drenched, and the peasants were ordered out to assist in moving the luggage; the crops had been bad, and both men and horses looked half starved; as they worked in the mire the new queen had an opportunity to compare the squalor and misery of the people with the splendor that awaited her at Versailles.[3]

Marie Leszczynski was nearly seven years older than her husband; she was very pious, and neither brilliant nor beautiful; she played on several instruments, and on all of them poorly; her voice was sweet, but it was very weak; she was fond of painting, but could never learn to draw correctly; she was

[1] Letters of Stanislaus to Count of Bourg.

[2] Marie Leszczynski to Stanislaus, published in *Histoire du Roi Stanislâs.*

[3] *Journal de Barbier*, September, 1725; *Mém. d'Argenson*, i. 53.

little fitted to exert any permanent influence over the man she had married; she tried to please him, and only succeeded in boring him. The queen regarded Louis with an affection that he was incapable of returning. "One has never loved as I love him," she wrote to a friend of her youth.[1] During the years of humiliation that followed, when the king was ever sinking deeper in vice and sensuality, she bore her lot with dignity. She may have felt that she would have been happier married to the marquis or the margrave than to the king of France, yet she indulged in no vain repining.

The selection of Marie Leszczynski was injudicious from a political standpoint, but whether the king married a Spanish or a Polish princess really made very little difference to France. The measures which Bourbon adopted for the treatment of French Protestants were more important and far more injurious.

The reign of Louis XV. witnessed the last phases of religious persecution in France. Two centuries had passed since the great struggle began in that country between Catholicism and the reformed creed; the unequal contest closed when Louis XIV. deprived the minority of their religious privileges, and a persistent effort was made to crush dissent. We have now to watch the exhibitions of the spirit which had animated the dragonnades, appearing half a century later, in an era when the foundations of religious belief were beginning to give way.

As a result of the measures taken by Louis XIV., the public worship of the reformed churches was not only forbidden, but for a while it was prevented. The great body of Huguenots conformed to certain

[1] Marie Leszczynski to Count of Bourg, December 3, 1728.

practices of Catholicism in order to avoid the fury of persecution; their children were baptized by priests; on certain festivities they attended the services of the church. Even these compliances were denounced as idolatrous by the more fervent. "It is said," writes one of the pastors, "that there are those so faint-hearted as to have their marriages celebrated and their children baptized in churches where a piece of dough is worshiped instead of the Creator."[1]

This formal submission had encouraged Louis to repeal the Edict of Nantes, and he died in the delusion that those who had once been Huguenots were now, with few exceptions, faithful members of the true church. An edict published a few months before his death declared his solemn conviction. "For seventy-two years of our reign we have omitted nothing in our power to draw from their errors those of our subjects who were born in the reformed religion, falsely so called. God has blessed our pious intentions in the great number who have abjured that creed, and their residence in our kingdom is sufficient proof that they have embraced the Catholic and Apostolic faith."[2] In truth, the number of Protestants who really became Catholics and nurtured their children in that faith was insignificant; as soon as the vigilance of the government was relaxed they neglected the services of the Catholic Church, and, when they dared, they met in their houses or in the open air for the worship of their faith; to use their own language, they prayed without ceasing, and waited for the deliverance of Zion.

While repression compelled some to a hypocritical

[1] Rapport d'Antoine Court.
[2] Déclaration, March 8, 1715.

compliance, it rendered more intense the fervor of others. The fear of death and of the galleys did not deter the faithful from meeting together by day and by night, and worshiping God according to their own consciences; when their churches were destroyed, the Huguenots took refuge in temples not made by hands.

Their services resembled those of the Scotch Covenanters: they gathered amid the hills; sometimes the rain fell in torrents, but it did not disperse the assemblage; at night, torches lit up the faces of the faithful, listening to the discourse of the preacher, or singing psalms amid the wilderness.[1] "Where have you preached?" asked the judge of Alexander Roussel, one of these itinerant ministers. "Wherever I have found Christians gathered together," was the reply. "Where has been your domicile?" "Under the vault of Heaven."

This fervent zeal sometimes became fanatical, and amid the wastes of the Cévennes in the early part of the century religious enthusiasm turned into frenzy. Half-wild mountaineers saw visions and dreamed dreams; the gifts of prophecy and of tongues descended upon many; a child of thirteen months bade its parents do works meet for repentance; infants babbled prophecy; boys of twelve and fifteen were seized by sudden inspiration and addressed assemblies in long and fervent exhortations; men fell down and rolled on the ground in their struggle with the Evil One. The patois of these districts was so different from the language talked at Paris that it was noticed as miraculous that those possessed by the spirit spoke in correct French. In Languedoc, it was said there

[1] Lettre de Court, ministère du désert, 1728.

were as many as eight thousand persons filled with the spirit of prophecy. The exhorters were generally men of very humble lot, filled with sudden religious zeal, rather than fitted by study for the duties of the ministry; they were weavers, carders, day laborers, some of whom could neither read nor write.

The Camisards, by which name the Protestants of the Cévennes were called, organized under the command of leaders possessing military skill as well as fanaticism, and an armed theocracy was established among these barren and desolate hills. For the most part, the Huguenots resembled the Puritans in a grave sobriety of dress, but the Camisard captains arrayed themselves in velvet mantles of crimson and scarlet, plumes floated from their hats, and swords with golden hilts were at their sides. Yet if their dress was that of the cavalier, their conduct was that of the Puritan; feasting or fighting, walking or resting, they prayed and praised God.[1] This religious excitement developed into rebellion in the later years of Louis XIV.'s reign, and the government found the task of suppressing the fanatics by no means an easy one; by compromise as much as by coercion the troubles were at last quieted.[2] From the regency of Orleans the oppressed religionists hoped for a larger measure of toleration. The regent would gladly have accorded it, but he was restrained by the indolence of his character, and by his unwillingness to give offense

[1] *Théâtre sacré des Cévennes*, a curious collection of supposed instances of supernatural manifestations, published in 1707.

[2] *Théâtre sacré; Histoire des troubles des Cévennes*, by Court; correspondence of the superintendents; and *Mémoires de Berwick et de Villars*. The insurrection of the Camisards is fully treated in Professor Baird's valuable work, *The Huguenots and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*.

to the Jesuit party and the friends of the late king; they might condone the orgies of the Palais Royal, but he knew they would never forgive the toleration of Huguenots. Still their condition improved; the favor of the court could no longer be gained by executing a minister or dispersing an assembly, and the zeal of the officers of the government in the work of persecution flagged. Under the lead of some devoted men the Protestant party in France was again organized; though the services of their religion were forbidden, under the penalty of death, the Reformed Church steadily increased in strength until at last, seventy years later, it was again granted religious freedom. Those engaged in the work of reorganization met with twofold difficulties. The long repression under Louis XIV. had not destroyed the Protestant faith in France, but its adherents were bound together with no formal tie, and many of them had sought tranquillity by a nominal profession of Catholicism. On the other hand, the excesses of the Camisards were not in harmony with the stern and sober theology of the Huguenot creed; such men as Antoine Court desired neither prophets in trances nor infants exhorting from the cradle. The synod which met in 1715 gave no encouragement to these vagaries; it adopted measures which were judicious, and some of which may justly be called humane. Many of these enthusiastic exhorters had preached for three and four hours at a time, but the synod laid down as a rule that no sermon should last more than an hour and a quarter. In those heroic days this allowance of time seemed moderate to the hearers as well as to preachers.

In other regulations, the French Huguenots showed close sympathy with the English Puritans; their

synods denounced with equal severity oaths and games, dancing and dancing-masters.

It was necessary to have a ministry educated for the work of exhortation and discipline, but who would desire a mission of which the pains and toils were incalculable, where neither wealth nor worldly honor were to be gained, and where the reward of years of hardship might be an ignominious death as a malefactor? "We want, for the ministry," said Antoine Court, "young men with a taste for martyrdom." They were always found. No good cause and hardly any bad cause has ever lacked followers willing to become martyrs.

The laws enacted by bigotry were slowly falling into desuetude; the French people were weary of seeing men sent to the galleys because they thought the theology of Calvin better than that of Thomas Aquinas, and the chapter of persecution in France in the last century would probably have been a short one, if the Duke of Bourbon had not infused new life into ancient error; the edict which he issued was the worst measure of his administration, and that is saying much.

There had always been those who advocated rigor in the treatment of the Protestants and complained that the laws against them were in large part allowed to become a dead letter. Prominent among these advocates of intolerance was Lavergne de Tresson, the bishop of Nantes, an ecclesiastic who was said to have accumulated seventy-six benefices, and who hoped to round out his career by receiving a cardinal's hat as a reward for sending Huguenots to the galleys. This ambitious and unscrupulous priest had argued with Orleans and Dubois in favor of severe

measures against the Protestants, but from neither did he receive any encouragement. Those statesmen were not disturbed by religious convictions, and they did not seek to feign a religious zeal which should take the form of persecution. But in Bourbon the bishop found a minister whose intelligence was narrow and whose heart was malevolent, and he now obtained permission to carry his plans into effect. Notwithstanding the disasters of the late years of Louis XIV., he was still the great king, and during all the reign of his successor, the government tried to cover its measures under that majestic shade. In May, 1724, an edict declared that nothing in the policy of the late king was more worthy of imitation than the measures he had adopted for the extinction of heresy; the punishment of death was accordingly denounced against any one who performed the functions of a minister of the reformed faith; the property of men who attended any of its services was to be confiscated, and they were to be sent to the galleys, while women thus offending were to be imprisoned for life. A multiplicity of other regulations of equal ferocity were intended to force unwilling subjects to conform to the practices of the Catholic Church, and to educate their children in that faith.

In all these barbarous provisions there was nothing new; the edict was a reënactment of the code of persecution under Louis XIV., and its penalties were already on the statute book. But the rigorous enforcement of these laws had long been relaxed; forty years had passed since the dragonnades, and the French people were weary of religious oppression. New ideas had moderated the intense Catholicism of the last century; these measures of bigotry were

reënacted when Voltaire had already become a popular writer, when the "Persian Letters" of Montesquieu were eagerly read, and years after the writings of Bayle had begun to exert their dissolving influence on French beliefs. The edict of 1724 was followed by no such active measures as had been witnessed under the ministry of Louvois. If Bourbon was equally bigoted, he was less vigorous. Moreover, so great had been the change in public feeling that it was now impossible to enforce a systematic religious persecution in France. In 1685, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had been greeted with enthusiasm; in 1724, the effort to compel uniformity of belief was received with indifference. Innocent blood was shed by rulers without morality at the instigation of priests without religion, but instead of perfecting the work of Louis XIV., and exterminating heresy in France, these renewed efforts resulted in entire failure. The cause of dissent waxed rather than waned during the eighteenth century; the attempts at persecution were just enough to stimulate and not enough to intimidate. They excited little comment at the time, and have received little notice from historians.

While the number was small of those who suffered in body or estate during the reign of Louis XV. on account of their religious beliefs, the treatment of the Protestants must not be disregarded among the causes which involved the old régime in a sanguinary overthrow. The influence of the Protestant population of France during this century was lost; it might have been important. They formed, indeed, a small minority, but they were men of strong convictions and resolute purpose; though a tendency towards republican-

ism might have developed among such a body, yet the Huguenots could always have been counted upon in favor of orderly government, of religious institutions, of liberty and not of license. They would not have been ensnared by the sophisms of Rousseau; if they believed the Catholic Church to be the Scarlet Woman, they would not have worshiped the Goddess of Reason. But the Protestants were kept under the ban of the law until just before the Revolution, and even if active persecution ceased, they exercised no influence on public thought.

The untimely oppression of this class brought further evil upon the state. The Gallican Church had occupied an imposing position during the seventeenth century; it produced great men; great institutions of charity and of learning were organized and fostered under its charge. When a time came which threatened its overthrow, when it was attacked by philosophers, and jeered at by scoffers, its energies were absorbed in wrangling and persecution. The clergy who obtained prominence in such issues were narrow and bigoted, even when they were not irreligious. Jansenists were put out of the pale because they were in error on the doctrines of free will; Huguenots were sent to the galleys because they held erroneous views about the mass; and this was done when the church, like the state, was tottering to its fall; if it had not been for bigoted priests and imbecile statesmen, the history of the French Revolution would have been different.

The persecution which followed the edict of 1724 was sporadic, but it furnished the usual phases of odious cruelty and of heroic resistance. In forty years eight ministers were executed for preaching the

truth as they understood it.[1] If the officials had been active in the work, this number would have been largely increased. Sixteen ministers had been put to death in Languedoc alone by the ferocious Baville from 1686 to 1698, and the decrease in the number of executions was not because the public services of the Reformed Church were less frequently held; the reverse was the case; in 1744, ten thousand people gathered to hear the preaching of Antoine Court, while thirty years before, only fifty or one hundred of the faithful had dared to show themselves at such assemblies. The crop was abundant, but the arm of the reaper was slack.

It was in 1745 that the minister Roger, one of the oldest workers among the pastors of the desert, was at last arrested. "It is time you found me," he said; "you have been looking for me for thirty-nine years." "At last the happy day has come which I have so long desired!" he exclaimed, as he mounted the scaffold. Another pastor, the young Alexander Ramsey, was condemned to death, but he escaped his pursuers, and for fifty years continued his ministrations in Dauphiné.

The fear of death rarely intimidated a clergy which was trained to martyrdom, yet two of them recanted at the sight of the scaffold. Both found the remorse for such an act worse than death. One fled to Holland after his release and again professed his faith, but nothing in the eyes of such a man could atone for having denied the Lord in the hour of peril. A person who knew him well twenty-five years later has described his appearance. The minister was then very old, but his face had an habitual expression of

[1] List given by Antoine Court, *Le patriote français.*

despair, his head was sunk on his shoulders as if in shame, and he wearied his friends by constantly referring to the awful day when he had been false to the faith, and by demanding whether the Lord would forgive one who had denied Him before men; a quarter of a century of repentance seemed too short to atone for such a crime.[1]

Most of the pastors of the desert performed their ministrations for a lifetime and escaped punishment, and their followers were equally fortunate. The zeal of the persecutors found no encouragement from the pacific Fleury; in 1745, there was a short season of increased rigor, but the entire number of men and women imprisoned or sent to the galleys for religious offenses during the forty years following the edict of 1724 was probably less than two thousand.[2] It was too small to check the progress of dissent, and quite large enough to be a blot on the history of the period.

The penalties that were enforced were often of revolting severity. One man, seventy-six years of age, was sent to the galleys for life for having attended a Huguenot service.[3] In 1759, a man of eighty-three was still in the galleys, where he had passed twenty-five years for furnishing refuge to a Protestant pastor;

[1] *Feuille religieuse*, cited by Coquerel.

[2] From 1745 to 1752, one hundred and sixteen Protestants were condemned to the galleys by the Parliament of Grenoble. *Mém. Hist.*, 1744–52. But this was a period of unusual activity, and Coquerel estimates that on an average not over a third of the punishments imposed were carried into execution. The number of Protestants in the galleys at Toulon in 1753 was only forty-eight, and there the most of those confined for religious offenses were stationed.

[3] See his letter of September, 1753, written from the galleys.

a lady was sentenced to pay a fine of six thousand livres and to three years of imprisonment, because she spoke words of encouragement to a Protestant on his death-bed. In the list of Protestants serving in the galleys at Toulon in 1753, we find one who had been condemned for life at the age of fourteen, and who had already served thirteen years. Forty-eight Huguenots were then serving terms at that place; in 1759, the number had fallen to forty-one; in 1769, one of the last victims was released at the age of eighty, after twenty-seven years passed in the galleys.[1]

Among all these sufferers for conscience' sake, the lot of the unhappy women imprisoned in the tower of Constance, at Aigues Mortes, has excited most compassion. The city of Aigues Mortes is one of the most ancient and curious in France. Louis IX. purchased it from the abbey to which it belonged, and from this port the Crusaders sailed under the command of the saintly king to the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. The ancient walls still inclose this dead city, which commerce deserted centuries ago, and which now stands drear and abandoned, surrounded by long expanses of salt marsh, and looking upon one of the most desolate views that the world affords. Among other improvements St. Louis rebuilt the great tower at the corner of the fortifications, from which the citizens had formerly watched for Saracen corsairs, and it received the name of the tower of Constance. Its proportions were imposing: the walls rose over 110 feet in height, and were 18 feet in thickness. This desolate and gloomy tower, no longer valuable for commerce or warfare,

[1] Lists published in Coquerel, ii. 427.

the government, in 1717, began to use as a prison for Huguenot women incarcerated for disobedience to the edicts against their faith. The prison consisted of two large, round halls, one above the other; the lower one received its light from above by a hole about six feet in diameter, and this also served to carry off the smoke; the upper hall was lighted by a similar opening into a terrace which formed the roof; these were the only openings for air and light, and they let in also both rain and wind; the beds were placed around the halls, and in the centre the fires were made.[1] In this gloomy habitation women passed long lives of misery, in need, in darkness, in discomfort, listening to the distant sound of the waves and to the howling of the wind over the marshes, and waiting for the day of deliverance, which came not. In 1737, twenty-two were there confined, and the number of inmates did not vary largely during half a century.[2] In 1754, one woman had been imprisoned for thirty-five years, and one for thirty-one years. Fourteen of the twenty-five were over sixty, and twelve had been in prison for more than fifteen years. The crime of having attended the service of the Huguenot church was usually that for which they were sentenced to life imprisonment.

The letters of one of the prisoners, Marie Durand, have been preserved, and they throw a curious light on the character of these obscure but heroic confessors. She was arrested when fifteen for attending a Huguenot assembly with her mother, and for this offense she remained in prison thirty-nine years.

[1] Description by Boissy d'Anglas, who visited the tower in 1763.

[2] See lists of prisoners made by Marie Durand and others.

The treatment accorded her and her fellow sufferers illustrates the unconcern with which a decaying system of persecution was administered. These women were confined because the government was trying to make Catholics out of Protestants, yet once in prison, they were allowed to pray and praise God according to their own fashion; no effort was made for their conversion; they corresponded freely with their pastors, and received from them religious counsel and exhortation; nominally their property was confiscated to the state, but the government officials administered it for the benefit of the prisoners, and gave them the revenues.[1] Still they were not released, for that required some act of vigor, some positive departure from codes and creeds in which few believed, but which all continued to enforce. No one dared to touch the crumbling fabric of barbaric laws; these unfortunate women did not excite the attention of the philosophers; no storm of indignation disturbed the government as to the inmates of the tower of Constance; the prisoners languished in prison, as did some in the Bastille, not because any one was anxious to keep them in, but because no one troubled himself to get them out.

To the humanity of the Prince of Beauvau the most of these women at last owed their deliverance. In 1768, he visited the tower, accompanied by the Chevalier of Boufflers. His companion writes that after mounting by dark and obscure staircases, they reached the prison. "We saw," he says, "a great hall, de-

[1] This curious fact appears from the correspondence of Marie Durand with her pastor. She was greatly annoyed by the inefficient manner in which, in her opinion, her property was managed.

prived of light and air, and in it fourteen women languishing in misery and tears. The commandant could not contain his emotion; for the first time these unhappy women saw compassion on a human face; they fell at his feet, bathed them in tears, and told of their sufferings. Alas, their only crime was to have been bred in the same faith as Henry IV. The youngest of these martyrs was fifty years of age."[1] They were soon released, but even as late as this the cause of bigotry found spokesmen. Beauvau was reproached for his humanity by one of the ministers of Louis XV., and some priests cried out at this act of mercy. But the time for such things was past, and no efforts of a few bigots could revive an era of persecution; the Protestants enjoyed a practical toleration for quarter of a century before the law secured them a legal toleration.

The persecution of the Huguenots was injurious to France, but it would not have shortened Bourbon's tenure of office. His financial measures, though less blameworthy, aroused more clamor and excited more discontent. The financial policy of the administration was under the charge of a man by no means lacking in capacity, and whose career showed that persons

[1] Description by Chevalier of Boufflers, Coquerel, i. 524. The authorities for the treatment of the Huguenots in the last century are found in *Théâtre sacré des Cévennes*, *Histoire des troubles des Cévennes*, by Court, *Le français patriote*, *Muse historique*, etc., and the numerous papers published by the French Protestant Society. The most valuable work is Coquerel's *Histoire des églises du désert*, for it is founded upon original documents and correspondence. The official correspondence of the Count of St. Florentin, who for twenty-five years had charge of the affairs of the Protestants in the *Aff. Etr.*, contains a history of most of their troubles from the standpoint of the government.

of the very humblest origin could sometimes attain wealth and power under the old régime. The Paris brothers were the sons of a man who kept a little hostelry in a desolate district near the Alps. When travelers came that way, which was not often, the four sons groomed the horses of the guest, made the beds, and pocketed with gratitude the occasional pourboires. Chance led an army provisioner to ask their aid in collecting supplies at a time of special need; they showed such energy and intelligence that he retained them in his employ, and in time they themselves became government contractors. Dealing with the state furnished almost the only opportunity for the acquisition of large wealth; the great French fortunes of the period, with few exceptions, were made from government contracts, or from farms of the taxes. The Paris brothers had both; they became rich; they became influential; ministers desired their assistance and listened to their advice; courtiers treated them with deference; even the royal mistresses did not disdain their good offices: for over fifty years they exercised a large influence in the finances and the policy of the country.[1] Paris Duverney, the ablest of the brothers, secured the favor of Mme. de Prie, and became Bourbon's financial adviser. The measures he adopted were not successful, but their failure was not altogether the fault of the projector.

The duke began with repealing various taxes imposed by his predecessor, in order to impress upon the public the advantages they had gained by the change. This would have been well, but the necessities of the government soon compelled the establish-

[1] St. Simon, *pas.*; Barbier, i. 219.

ment of new duties, and these were received with indignant protest. A tax of two per cent. was imposed on all incomes, and also on all crops payable in kind.[1] The mode of payment was ill advised, but the law itself was neither unjust nor injudicious; unlike most taxes, this fell upon all, and not alone upon those who were already overburdened. It was greeted with an immense clamor from the poor who wished to pay no more, and from the rich who did not wish to pay at all, and amidst all the voices of protest, that of the clergy was heard with especial shrillness.

It is impossible to estimate accurately what proportion the church owned of the entire property of the kingdom; it was probably as much as one quarter, and all this wealth practically escaped taxation.[2] The general assembly did indeed vote a free-will offering to the support of the king, yet the amount was trifling in comparison with their just proportion of the public burdens. They were subject also to some forms of indirect taxation, yet we can safely say that one half of what the peasant earned by his labor was absorbed by the charges of the government, while the entire contribution of the clergy was not three per cent. of their income.

The Gallican Church now unanimously protested against the attempt to subject its property to the imposition of the fiftieth; the bishops threatened excommunication; the general assembly remonstrated against taking for secular purposes the money that was needed

[1] *Déclaration*, June 5, 1725.

[2] The Venetian ambassador then at Paris estimated that one third of the national wealth was in the hands of the clergy. *MSS. Bib. Nat.*

to furnish a livelihood to Christ's ministers, and to soothe the sorrows of the poor.[1] If this had been the case, the exemption would have rankled less in the minds of those whose burdens were thereby increased; but such an assertion at this time was almost a travesty on the facts. The most of the inferior clergy were indeed poorly and insufficiently paid; but the wealth of the great ecclesiastics was enormous; when a bishop lived like a wealthy duke, and an archbishop emulated the splendor of a prince of the blood, to talk of exempting their incomes from taxation because they were needed to soothe the sorrows of the poor seemed like a sorry jest.

The attempt to subject church property to this impost was, however, abandoned; privilege was the essence of the old régime; not only were the protests of the clergy respected, but their rights were again solemnly proclaimed. An edict issued in October, 1726, declared that the property of the church was consecrated to God, and could never be subjected to any tax or imposition whatever.[2] Both clergy and nobility were successful in resisting the efforts made during the century to deprive them of privileges which had become odious, but such victories proved costly in the end.

The other financial experiments of Bourbon's government were equally unsuccessful. The value of the livre had been greatly reduced during the speculations of the regency, and Paris Duverney now endeavored to restore it to its former value. Though something could be said in defense of such a measure, a change in the nominal value of the currency was attended

[1] *Dis. Ven.*, 214, 362 *et pas.*

[2] *Déclaration*, October 8, 1726 ; *Anc. lois fran.*, 21, 301.

with disarrangement of business and suffering in the community.

These frequent changes of nominal values were less ruinous than we might suppose; little business was done on credit; as there was little confidence, there was less possibility of creating a lack of confidence. Moreover there was always in circulation a large number of old coins and foreign pieces, and to some extent affairs on the smaller scale of those days could be carried on with them; shopkeepers and peasants continued to bargain in Spanish doubloons or the silver pieces of Louis XIII., without regard to the value of the livre as fixed by the latest edict. Yet this trifling with the medium of exchange was injurious in its results, and it had much to do with preventing any large growth of business and wealth. The French currency at last reached a stable basis under Fleury, and to this, more than to any other one cause, is due the commercial development which France witnessed later in the century.

A widespread discontent was caused by Bourbon's measures; there were risings against the new taxes in many of the provinces; the condition of Normandy was exceptionally wretched, and riots were frequent; the parliament of Brittany besought the king in his mercy to save the province from ruin; in Paris, bread and meat were scarce, and the prices were alarmingly high.

The changes made in the currency furnished abundant pretext for grievances, and some of the quarrels of workmen with their employers assumed features that are familiar in modern strikes. Four thousand workers employed in the manufacture of stockings at Paris refused to accept a reduction in their nominal

wages, though the new livre possessed a greater value than the old; those who continued work were assaulted and beaten; a fund was raised from which a crown a day was given to each man out of employment; the strikers organized themselves into a body, with officers to oversee the distribution of the money, and to attend to the interests of their cause. The action of the government was less modern; the comptroller general decided that such conduct was illegal; and a dozen of the leaders were at once arrested, put in prison, and there kept on bread and water.[1]

A new institution illustrated in another way the approach to modern forms of business. In 1724, the Bourse of Paris was organized.[2] The transactions of the Rue Quincampoix during the Mississippi excitement had foreshadowed modern speculation, industrial development in France demanded some place where property could be conveniently sold and transferred, and the government recognized the propriety of placing this under the protection of the state. The site for the Bourse was chosen in the Rue Vivienne, where it still remains, and many of the regulations have suffered no radical alteration in a century and a half. Sixty brokers were licensed to buy and sell commercial paper and other securities, their hours were fixed from ten to one, and their commissions were established at one quarter of one percent., except that on the sale of merchandise they could take one half of one per cent. Banks have since then diverted the purchase of commercial paper from the Bourse, but this still remains the financial centre of the country, in which transactions daily take place

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, i. 350, 1.

[2] Arrêt, September 24, 1724.

compared with which the dealings of the Rue Quincampoix were insignificant. The institution of the Bourse was a result of the new life given to business by Law's gigantic operations, and like many other results of his activity, it was of assistance in the rapid development of wealth which began in the last century.

Bourbon's administration might have survived the public discontent which it had aroused, but he insured his overthrow by an injudicious attempt to rid himself of Fleury. Though the former preceptor was willing to leave Bourbon at the head of the government, he would allow no interference with his own authority. He attended all the conferences between Louis and the prime minister, and if Fleury advanced an opinion, it was sure to become that of the king. Wearied of this, and sure of the queen's friendship, Bourbon held a council in her room, to which Fleury was not bidden. The preceptor resolved on a plan that he had before adopted with success; he sent a farewell letter to the king, and retired from the court. Doubtless he expected that his recall would be demanded by Louis, and so it was. The king was dejected at the absence of the man whom he regarded as his best friend, and judicious courtiers suggested that he had but to order his return. Bourbon had not sufficient resolution to persist in his purpose, and he was obliged to send a letter written with his own hand, asking Fleury to come back; the discreet preceptor promptly acceded, and assumed his position in the councils of the king with a recognized ascendency which was not again questioned.[1]

The ministry lasted a few months longer, but

[1] Walpole to Newcastle, June 13, 1726.

Fleury at last decided to take the administration into his own hands. Bourbon and Mme. de Prie were universally hated, and there was no risk in overthrowing a prince of the blood who had made himself odious to all. Louis was ready to do whatever his adviser counseled, and he performed his part with the dissimulation for which he had a natural talent. On the morning of June 11, 1726, the king parted from Bourbon with unusual affability, and said as he left him, "My cousin, do not keep us waiting for supper to-night." The duke was not to enjoy the honor of supping with his sovereign; as he prepared to follow to Rambouillet, the captain of the guards handed him a *lettre de cachet*, dismissing him from office, and ordering him to retire forthwith to Chantilly and there remain. He obeyed without resistance. His career was ended, and for the rest of his life he was a political nullity. Business had been poor under his rule; distress was prevalent, and bread was dear; the police authorities had to interfere to prevent bonfires blazing in all the streets of Paris in token of the popular joy at the overthrow of the minister.[1]

Mme. de Prie was exiled to Normandy, where she literally wasted away with rage and disappointed ambition, and died within a few months.[2] Her lover took his fate more calmly; at Chantilly he had game preserves that could not be excelled in France; he gathered about him a collection of wild beasts, whose savage nature had peculiar charm for him, and he diverted himself in watching their ways; with his private wealth and the pensions and sinecures which he

[1] Barbier, i. 428.

[2] *Mém. d'Argenson*, i. 61.

still enjoyed, he had an income of two millions, and he consoled himself for political insignificance. The Paris brothers were also sent into exile, but for men of their ability time was sure to bring new opportunities.

CHAPTER III.

THE MINISTRY OF CARDINAL FLEURY.

After Bourbon's dismissal it was decided to imitate one of the famous incidents of the administration of Louis XIV. Almost in the words of his great-grandfather, Louis XV. declared that henceforward he should be his own chief minister, and that the members of his council could address themselves to him for instruction as to their duties. In words only did the young king imitate his ancestor; Louis XIV. never abandoned the endeavor to rule his kingdom himself, but Louis XV. did not even make the attempt. Doubtless it was at Fleury's suggestion that his pupil professed a desire to take upon himself the duties of his office; alike in youth and age Louis XV. was a fainéant king, not from lack of ability, but from lack of interest. While Fleury lived, the king was willing that he should do as he pleased, and he reposed in his former tutor a confidence that was not misplaced; after the cardinal's death ministers were left to their own devices, not because Louis trusted them, but because he was too indifferent to interfere.

Fleury was in his seventy-third year when he assumed the duties, though not the title, of prime minister. He declined to accept that office, saying that he would be only an adviser to the king, but in fact the will of the minister was law; Fleury had been coy in assuming authority, but he clung to it with tenacity, and was jealous of the slightest division of power.

In many things he resembled his contemporary, Sir Robert Walpole, and like him he wished no partners in business.

Fleury was soon made a cardinal, and thus took his place in the line of succession from Richelieu, Mazarin, and Dubois, who had combined the dignity of the cardinalate with the power of a prime minister. None of his predecessors had exercised so unquestioned an authority; he was sure of the affectionate docility of his former pupil; there was no Day of the Dupes during his administration, because no one for a moment thought it possible to induce the king to dismiss the cardinal. Fleury did not wish to have his master take an active part in matters of state, Louis did not wish to do so, and they dwelt together in perfect harmony.

Nor was Fleury exposed to any danger from the popular hostility, that had twice driven Mazarin from his place; the conditions which made a Fronde possible no longer existed in France, and the time was past when any nobleman, however powerful, contemplated the possibility of taking up arms against the royal authority. Thus the cardinal was left to enjoy seventeen years of power undisturbed by court intrigues, untrammeled by the king, and unaffected by popular criticism. On the whole, this long administration was beneficial to France. Fleury was not a man of original mind, nor one who would seek to change the institutions which he found established. By temperament he was cautious even to timidity, disinclined to meddle in the affairs of the community, or to take part in the disputes of other countries; the authority of the state was exercised with somewhat diminished activity, and the citizen enjoyed the advantages of being let alone.

Though the great industrial and commercial development of France came somewhat later in the century, yet improvement could be seen in the time of Fleury, and in some measure he contributed to that result. His administration was an economical one, and thrift in the government expenditures was a boon to the country. After the long depression at the close of Louis XIV.'s reign and the wild and ruinous speculation of the regency, came a period of quiet, of moderate taxation, and of recuperation. In the towns, in manufactures, and in commerce, there was a substantial growth. If the development of the French colonies was small when compared with those of England, it was more rapid than it had been before. Whatever harm had resulted from Law's undertakings, they gave new life to French enterprise; the revolution in French trade in the eighteenth century attracted little attention amid the political changes which took place, but it exercised a large influence upon them; the petty shopkeeper of the Valois period was rapidly becoming the merchant of modern times, and the growth of a rich and influential bourgeoisie introduced a new factor into social and political life. There is no surer test of prosperity than an increase in the revenue, when this is not caused by the imposition of new taxes. In 1726, the farms yielded eighty millions; in 1742, they produced ninety-one millions.[1] "The finances," wrote Barbier in 1737, "are in better condition than they have ever been, and it will be a misfortune to lose the cardinal." In both his statements the Parisian bourgeois was right. In part, this result was due to the fact that Fleury insisted upon business methods that had long been

[1] Mém. sur les recettes générales, *MSS. Bib. Nat.*

lacking. The cardinal made no radical alterations in the established system, he made no effort to do away with the vicious institution of farmers general, but he did the best he could with the administrative methods which he found in force. He was by nature thrifty; courtiers jested at the scanty fare he set before his guests, — the plain roast and the four entrées which he could never be persuaded to exceed, — but the prudent economy manifested in his own life he introduced into the state, and it was a wholesome change from the costly display which had been dear to Louis XIV.[1] Those bred to the idea that a king could not be too liberal sneered at what were called the cheeseparing methods of the cardinal, but they resulted in a surplus, a thing unknown in French finance since the days of Colbert.[2] With one exception his administration was free from the attempts at partial repudiation which had injured the national credit and compelled the government to borrow at exorbitant rates. Soon after he assumed office various annuities and obligations paying less than ten livres a year were canceled; it was repudiation on a diminutive scale. This measure was the more unjust because it fell on small holders. The income of a hundred poor men was reduced, said a critic, while on the same day pensions to the amount of fifty-six thousand livres were granted the family of a retiring official; what the government gained by injustice it lost by prodigality.[3] Such proceedings had been common in the past, but they were not to Fleury's taste. In the future the

[1] *Mém. de Cheverny; Mém. de Luynes*, v. 242.

[2] There was a surplus for only a brief period, the expenses of war resulting again in a small deficit.

[3] *Journal de Barbier*, August, 1727.

interest on the debt was paid regularly and at the rate agreed upon; there were no pale rentiers while the cardinal was at the head of the administration, and under him there was a reduction of the national indebtedness, not by repudiation, but by honest payment out of surplus revenues.

In the two years prior to the war of the Austrian Succession there was a surplus of fifteen millions annually, — a phenomenon which was not again witnessed under the old régime. Nor was there any foundation for the charge so often made that Fleury sacrificed the marine to a false economy. In 1725, under Bourbon, twelve million livres were spent on the marine; in 1739, under Fleury, the expenditures reached nineteen millions, an amount hardly inferior to the sum spent under Louis XIV. in times of peace.[1]

The improved condition of the national finances under Fleury had a beneficial effect on business, but the country owed to him a still greater boon. The currency was at last established on an immovable basis, and this measure did more to accelerate the increase of wealth and the development of industry than all the commercial codes at which Colbert so earnestly labored. For the first time in French history the country enjoyed during a long period an unchanged standard of value; as it had been fixed, so it remained.

The alterations made by the government in the established value of coins had been frequent; from the days of Charlemagne to those of Louis XV. the fraudulent process had gone on, until a livre in 1726 contained only a one-seventy-second part of the intrinsic value of a livre in 814. The sovereign had

[1] Clamageran, iii. 281, citing *Arch. Nat.*

usually been in financial straits, and a depreciation of the currency seemed a simple way to pay his debts. It had been less evident that such measures would diminish his revenues by lessening the wealth of his subjects, but this constant juggling with the currency rendered it almost impossible to carry on business on an extended scale.

In 1726, the last change in the French standard was adopted under the influence of Paris Duverney. It was declared in the edict that the values thus established should be maintained; the promise had often been made in the past and never observed; this time the government kept faith with the people; subject to some trifling changes, French coins have remained of the same weight and fineness from that day to this.

Fleury's action seemed simple, and yet it produced far-reaching and most beneficial results; he took the standard as he found it, and would not allow it to be altered; he was essentially an honest man, and in refraining from tampering with the currency he did a good work, the importance of which probably he did not himself realize. By the edict of 1726, the value of a gold mark was established substantially as it has remained; the ratio of gold to silver was fixed at about fifteen to one, and that figure closely represented the relative value of the two metals for a century and a half.

By the end of Fleury's long administration, the financial principles adopted by him had taken root. Business had improved, and the national income increased in an era of fixed values and of reasonable stability; the idea of tampering with the currency no longer suggested itself as an advisable way of helping

the treasury, and was not again adopted under the old régime. Freed from the uncertainties which had threatened them, French trade and commerce developed during the fifty years before the Revolution with greater rapidity than at any time in the history of the past. It was possible to undertake new enterprises, with the assurance that a contract for a thousand louis would represent the same value ten years in the future, that the obligation of the government or of a merchant would be paid in the same currency as that with which the lender parted; of all the causes which assisted in the industrial development of France in the eighteenth century, this, which has received the least attention, was perhaps the most potent. "The 15th of June, 1726," an eminent historian has said, "is a great date in the economical history of France; the era of false money closed, the era of an honest and fixed currency begun."[1]

In another direction the development of the country was aided by government action, for the improvement of highways made rapid progress under Fleury. In the last century the condition of French roads had been lamentable; in many mountainous districts the inhabitants laid in provisions for six months, because for so long a time as that communication with the outside world was impossible.[2] Even in more level and populous sections the condition of things was not very much better; over a large proportion of the highways no one ever went by carriage; the Turkish ambassador has described his journey from Toulon to Paris during the regency, and the difficulties he encountered in traveling through the centre of France

[1] Clamageran, *Histoire de l'impôt*, iii. 240.

[2] *Mém. de l'intendant de Montauban.*

were greater than now beset the trapper making his way over mountain paths in Colorado.[1] There was indeed some improvement under Louis XIV., but the country was large and progress was slow.

In the following century the amelioration of highways went on at a greatly accelerated pace, and it was assisted by an important change. Some of the chief highways were already under government supervision, but many remained under the control of neighboring noblemen. It was not strange that their condition was almost uniformly bad; if the nobleman exerted himself at all, it was usually to compel the construction of a convenient road to his own château by means of forced labor, and it was rarely that the interests of a large proprietor and of the towns or peasants in the vicinity would be the same. Naturally, therefore, the roads near a gentleman's house were often unnecessarily good, while in other localities they were reprehensibly bad. In 1738, the king assumed exclusive control of all the principal highways, and an intelligent and active attention was given them. Out of this change, with all its benefits, grew an additional and sometimes a very grievous burden upon the peasantry. The royal corvée came into existence in a perfectly fortuitous way, without even the formality of an edict. Among feudal privileges had long existed the right of the seigneur to a certain amount of unpaid labor from his tenant, and this was exacted for road building as well as for other uses. There had been no royal corvée; even if the government sometimes compelled men to perform work for which it did not pay, such cases were exceptional and were sanctioned by no law. Under

[1] *Rélation de l'Ambassade de Mehemet Effendi.*

Fleury's administration this practice became a recognized institution, though still it might be said that it was without any sanction of the law. When the government assumed control of the highways, to make men work without pay often seemed an easy way to complete a job, and in 1738, the comptroller general, by a simple instruction to minor officials, authorized the use of forced labor on public works. On this informal memorandum rested a usage which soon became a heavy burden on the peasants.

The practice appeared so convenient to the government that it was approved, though it had not been formally imposed, and in time the corvée came to be regarded a legal imposition, no more to be resisted than the taille. A peasant required by an official to give his labor on some public work was in no position to question the legality of the requisition, and the extent of the demands made upon him varied with the needs of the service. It was regulated somewhat by custom and still more by caprice. From the age of sixteen to sixty every one subject to the taille could be compelled to render gratuitous labor on government work, and no limit was placed on the time that he could be thus employed; it ranged from eight to fifty days, and the man who did not work with sufficient industry could be imprisoned.

This new tax, like many other taxes, fell entirely on the peasantry; no one thought of requiring a gentleman either to work or to furnish a substitute; the artisan escaped under the protection of the city in which he dwelt; the agricultural laborer was regarded as the natural subject for taxation; he was defenseless, he was the easiest person from whom to demand assistance, and upon him alone fell the burden of the royal corvée.

Like most taxes under the old régime, this was an injudicious one. Long before, Colbert had experimented with forced labor in government work, and his good sense convinced him that it was not profitable even to the government. The system imposed great hardship on the peasants; they were often taken far from their homes, and they rendered their service grudgingly. A slight increase to the taille would have cost the taxpayers less and been worth more to the state.

Yet, though this imposition was costly and unjust, it produced valuable results. The work done by the corvée was almost entirely in the building of highways; when similar labor had been rendered at the request of great landowners, it had rarely been judiciously applied, but under the direction of government officials a system of roads was constructed in France, which could be equaled in no other part of Europe, and which proved an important factor in the rapid development of French wealth. Under Louis XV. it was estimated that in all six thousand leagues of road were built by the state. The magnificence of the highways constantly attracted Arthur Young's attention when he traveled in France shortly before the Revolution. "If the French have not husbandry to show us," he writes, "they have roads; nothing can be more beautiful." "Coming from Spain," he says again, "you tread at once on a noble causeway, made with all the solidity and magnificence that distinguishes the highways of France." Some of these indeed he found more costly than was required by the necessities of the travel that passed over them, but it was better to have the roads too good than too bad.

The administration of Cardinal Fleury covered

more than one third of Louis XV.'s actual reign; the king was little over twenty when his former preceptor became prime minister; he had grown to be a man of almost forty when Fleury died, but he took no more active part in the work of government at the close of the cardinal's rule than at its beginning. It is probable that the minister was willing that his former pupil should follow his advice without question; he did not relish interference from his master any more than from his associates, but at least he used his influence to keep Louis a respectable though a fainéant ruler. The cardinal did not seek to base his favor on the good will of some mistress; though the queen bore him no love, he never sought to undermine her position.

It was not until towards the close of Fleury's ministry that Louis began to indulge in dissipations which became more shameless with advancing years. In this respect the king's career was as curious as it was unedifying. Strict regard for conjugal fidelity had not been a characteristic of French kings, and they had suffered little in the opinion of their people on that account. A king's wife was selected for political and not for personal reasons; if he turned his eyes elsewhere, he was not apt to sigh in vain, and it is doubtful if many of his subjects thought any the worse of him for occasional deviations from the paths of rectitude. But Louis XV. was timid by temperament and cold in heart, and it needed a professional Lothario like the Duke of Richelieu to embark him in a course of gallantry. When he was young he led a life of great propriety; he began a career of license when most men feel that it is time to be done with youthful follies; few French gentlemen were such

models of virtue as Louis XV. at twenty, and no French gentleman was so sunk in low sensuality as Louis XV. at sixty.

Fleury's love of peace inclined him to a cautious policy in his dealings with foreign powers, but the cardinal was shrewd as well as pacific, and he kept France free from embarrassing entanglements without any loss of national prestige. It was from Spanish complications that war seemed most likely to arise. In 1727, the Spanish began a long and useless siege of Gibraltar, and their queen was eager for hostilities in Italy in order to make Italian princes of her sons. Fleury was not inclined to go to war on Elizabeth's account, and for some years the relations of the Spanish Bourbons were more intimate with the Austrians than with their French cousins.

By a treaty signed in 1725, Spain had guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction, and in return there had been vague hopes held out of a marriage between the sons of Elizabeth and the two daughters of Charles VI. Such an alliance would again have united the Houses of Spain and Austria, but it is doubtful if the emperor entertained the idea seriously, and in the mean time he himself was threatened with war by England and Holland unless he abandoned the commercial company by means of which he hoped to rebuild the ruined trade of Ostend. Largely on account of the exertions of Walpole and Fleury, none of these grounds of dispute resulted in a breach of the peace, and at last by the treaty of Vienna signed in 1731 the emperor abandoned the Ostend company, and Don Carlos took possession of the duchy of Parma with the promise of becoming Grand Duke of Tuscany on the death of the present ruler, who was the last of the line of the Medicis.

If the cardinal was able to avert war abroad, he was less successful in stilling the disturbances which were excited in the church and the Parliament by the disputes between Jesuit and Jansenist theologians.

The famous bull Unigenitus was issued by Pope Clement XI. in 1713, and Louis XIV., whose religious policy was controlled by the Jesuits, had insisted that it should be received as part of the ecclesiastical polity of his kingdom. It censured one hundred and one propositions approved by the Jansenist doctors, and had been extorted from the Pope by his Jesuit advisers, as a solemn condemnation of the heterodox views of their enemies. For that very reason the judges, who bore a traditionary hostility to the Society of Jesus, insisted that the Unigenitus should not be accepted as a declaration of faith binding on members of the Gallican Church, and they steadfastly opposed its registration. Very largely the people of Paris, the university, the bourgeoisie, were Jansenist in their sympathies, and for the same reason as the judges; they understood little of the abstruse doctrines dear to the disciples of the Port Royal, but they disliked the Jesuits and therefore they viewed their adversaries with approval. During almost half a century of conflict over these questions between the courts and the king, popular sympathy was always with the former. Louis XIV. did indeed compel the registration of the Constitution, as the bull was commonly styled, but the courts never ceased to protest against it, and to declare that it was not binding on the consciences of French believers.

If the judiciary were not disposed to yield an unquestioning obedience to papal declarations of the faith, the great majority of the superior clergy were

strongly ultramontane. This had not always been so, but the French clergy were essentially royalist, and when the king was zealous in his acceptance of the papal decree, they were not apt to lag behind in obedience to the head of the church. For a century, appointments to important ecclesiastical offices in France had been for the most part controlled by the Jesuits, and when a Jesuit confessor advised with his royal penitent as to the persons fit for the great dignities of the church, a Jansenist was hardly more apt to be recommended than a Mahometan. As a result, there were few possessors of bishoprics or rich abbeys who did not regard those who refused to accept the Unigenitus as no better than heretics. This would have done little harm if they had been content to keep their opinions to themselves, but their efforts at proselytizing often took the form of persecution.

In the early part of Louis XV.'s reign there were still a few bishops in sympathy with the Jansenist party, and among the lower clergy it had numerous supporters. Those who clung to doctrines that were now condemned at Rome soon began to suffer from the assaults of their more orthodox brethren. The Bishop of Senez, in his pastoral, took occasion to attack the bull, and his brethren decided that this infraction of discipline must not go unpunished. A council met and solemnly condemned his position; the bishop was declared guilty of seditious heresy, he was deprived of his bishopric and ordered to retire to a remote abbey. The circumstances connected with this vindication of the faith were singularly unfortunate, and the action of the council of Embrun was among the injudicious measures by which the Jesuits in this century unnecessarily outraged public senti-

ment. The Bishop of Senez was an old man of eighty; he had been known as a preacher of ability; he had led a life of apostolic zeal, beloved by his flock, and giving to the poor with an almost unexampled liberality. The council which convened to condemn a man of saintly character was presided over by Tencin, the Archbishop of Embrun, a person of unquestioned capacity, but of notorious immorality. Tencin had been judicially convicted of simony; he had made his way in the world partly by the good judgment he showed in using Dubois's money in purchasing for him his promotion to the cardinalate, and partly by the influence of his sister, who was an apostate nun and a courtesan of high degree.

This imprudent piece of persecution was followed by other steps that were no wiser. Some curés of Paris were deposed because they would not acknowledge the authority of the bull; some advocates of the Parliament signed a protest against its doctrines and were sent into temporary banishment. In 1730, by a royal edict, all priests of whatever degree were ordered to accept the Unigenitus without modification or discussion, and if they failed to do so their benefices were to become vacant. This edict was certainly a very outrageous act, and the Parliament refused to register it. Thereupon the king went in person to enforce its registration by a bed of justice. He was received in gloomy silence; not a single cry of *Vive le roi* was heard as Louis passed into the Parliament on his errand, and this silence was so unusual amid a loyal and enthusiastic people that it excited much comment. The Parliament was solemnly forbidden to discuss these questions, but to such orders the judges gave no heed; more royalist than the king,

they declared that they must be firm against the monarch himself when he misunderstood his rights and advocated doctrines in which the superiority of ecclesiastical authority was asserted almost in the language of Gregory and Innocent.

Zealous bishops continued to issue fervent pastorals, and when these were unacceptable to the Parliament the court condemned them as seditious, and ordered them to be burned by the hangman; the bishops complained that the judges supported doctrines contrary to the faith; the judges replied that the bishops preached doctrines subversive of the state. Amid all this wrangling the public was constant in its animosity against the Jesuits, and manifested this on every occasion. A legacy made to a Jesuit house was attacked as illegal; apparently there was little cause for questioning the validity of the bequest, but it was set aside, and the announcement of the decision was greeted with applause in the court-room. As the Jesuit fathers retired, they had to pass through a hooting and jeering mob, which threw mud at them literally as well as figuratively. Journals and broadsides indulged in unmeasured abuse of the Jesuit party, and all efforts to suppress them were without success. The history of one of these papers, called "Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques," is curious, because it illustrates the laxity with which the administration under Louis XV. was carried on. While the severity of ancient legislation as to the press was preserved and in some cases increased, a lax enforcement often allowed greater license than would be suffered under many modern governments. Nothing could be stricter than the French code by which the censorship of the press was sought to be established; no book or paper

could be published unless it had first received the approval of the government; unless fortified with such approval it could not be sold, and grievous penalties were imposed for any violation of these regulations. The author, the publisher, and even the seller could be branded, confined in prison, sent to the galleys; even death was declared the penalty for some offenses.

While all these laws were in force, in 1728, the publication of the "Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques" was begun. This periodical became the avowed organ of the Jansenist party, and in its pages were found the most virulent abuse of the Jesuits and of ecclesiastics thought to be friendly towards them; regardless of rank or office, bishops, priests, and deacons were discussed with equal freedom, and in theological acerbity the paper did not fall short of the best models. It is needless to say that such a journal received no license; it was especially obnoxious to the authorities, and the police sought to discover the guilty parties who supplied the public with heterodox literature. Yet notwithstanding such efforts and all the rigorous laws against unauthorized publications, the "Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques" continued to be published at Paris for over sixty years, and was distributed to its subscribers with almost as much regularity as the "Times" now is in London. It was not possible to suppress this journal with ease, and the government lacked the energy for the resolute and persistent effort that would have been required to stamp it out. Occasionally the police laid hands on some vender or porter in possession of the forbidden sheet, but such persons were unacquainted with the editors or publishers of the paper, and in its delivery it passed through so many hands that no one could trace the responsible

parties. With laws for the censorship of the press quite as strict as they are to-day in Russia, works attacking the church and criticising the state circulated in France under Louis XV. with almost as much freedom as in England.

The efforts of the clergy to suppress such publications were no more successful than those of the police. The Archbishop of Paris threatened with excommunication the members of his flock who continued to read the "Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques," but the paper was read all the same. In one of his pastorals he inserted some paragraphs recognizing the authority of the Unigenitus, and ordered his clergy to read this in their churches. Twenty-one curés forthwith signed a protest, refusing to obey, and the archbishop deprived them of their livings. The curé of St. Jacques was more obedient. He had been recently appointed, and on the 11th of May, 1732, he took possession of his new charge. A great crowd had gathered to listen to his first discourse, and all went peaceably until the curé, after making some remarks on the obedience due the authorities of the church, put his hand in his pocket as if he were about to draw from it the offending pastoral. Instantly there began a great tumult. Two thousand people arose and hastened to leave the building, lest their ears should be offended by listening to the utterances of the archbishop; they threw over the chairs and elbowed one another in their eagerness to escape from the sanctuary that was thus to be desecrated; a few faithful old women remained, and when the noise had ceased so that his voice could be heard, the curé proceeded to read the obnoxious pastoral.[1]

[1] *Mém. de Barbier*, ii. 266.

In such a controversy the Parliament was sure to interfere, and naturally it espoused the cause of the disobedient curés. The king bade the judges to cease deliberating about the affairs of the church. They presented their remonstrances, but were received with scant courtesy. "I have told you my wish," said Louis, "and it must be executed. I want no remonstrances and no replies. You have merited my indignation. Be more obedient, and attend to your legal duties." "Sire," said the president, beginning to reply. "Be still," cried the king; and the president did not venture to continue. Thereupon another of the court presented a written paper. "Tear it up," said the king, and it was forthwith destroyed.

The judges were none the more amiable for such rebukes. There were commands, they argued, which must be disobeyed; suppose the king had given orders that he was not to be aroused; if his palace took fire, could they leave him to perish rather than disobey? "This is our position now," they said: "the king sleeps, his kingdom is on fire, it is for us to arouse him." The monarch was unwilling to be aroused by his Parliament, and one hundred and fifty judges thereupon signed a paper abandoning their positions. "We cannot disobey the king," they declared, "nor can we neglect the duties of our office, and therefore we must resign them." They marched from the Parliament building in solemn procession, two by two, their eyes bent upon the ground, amid a vast multitude, who expressed their approval by crying out, "There are the true Romans, the fathers of the country."

In all these conflicts between the Parliament and the monarch there was an element of weakness and

insincerity, and as a result the French kings and their judges wrangled for two hundred years without establishing a single principle that was of advantage to the political development of the state. A class of men holding judicial positions by inheritance or purchase could by no possibility exercise a check on royal authority that would be of much value to the community, and if the judges were now popular, it was chiefly because their opponents were unpopular. "The true Romans" had no thought of permanently abandoning the valuable offices which constituted their dignity and furnished their livelihood; the king had no wish to lose the services of men who were well equipped for their judicial duties, and were respected in the community, and Fleury was eminently well adapted for settling controversies which neither party desired to carry to an undue extreme. He had been educated in Jesuit schools, and his relations with the order were friendly; as a priest his sympathies were with the ultramontane party, and he was content to accept the Unigenitus; but he was not a virulent bigot; he was by temperament opposed to extreme measures; he had no taste for persecution, and a strong taste for tranquillity. When such were the feelings of the opposing factions, some result was sure to be reached by which the dignity of both would be saved, and the state would be neither better nor worse for their contention. The recalcitrant judges were sent into temporary exile. "That will calm them," said an impartial spectator; "they will regret Paris, their theatres, their country parties, and their mistresses; they will be put to much expense and get little pleasure."

This forecast was verified, and after a brief period of exile the disputes between the monarch and his

courts were adjusted. Some edicts which were offensive to the dignity of the judges were suspended; in return for this the spokesman of the Parliament declared in the name of the body that they recognized the absolute and sovereign authority of the king. "We know," said he, "that he is the master; it is for him to command and for us to obey." This was a perfectly just statement of the legal relations between the king and the courts: the monarch had by law the right to command, and the Parliament was bound to obey. It had indeed the right to advise, but the right to give advice is not an important one. The judges resumed their functions, and the disputes over the Unigenitus were forgotten in the war of the Polish Succession, which soon began.

While the quarrels were waging, the community was agitated by the curious manifestations known as the miracles of the Deacon Paris. The Jansenists were as ready as their opponents to give credence to the direct interposition of the Divinity; in the last century, the great intellect of Pascal had been profoundly impressed by the so-called miracle of the holy thorn, and the inmates of Port Royal appealed to the cures worked by it as manifest proofs of God's favor towards their community. In 1730, the public was more skeptical than when the miracles of the thorn checked the persecutors of Port Royal, but at a time when the Jesuits were able to obtain the papal recognition of the visions of Marie Alacoque, it was not strange that many were ready to believe in the marvels performed at the cemetery of St. Médard, the truth of which was loudly proclaimed by Jansenist leaders.

The Deacon Paris was a man of wealth for those

days, with an income of ten thousand livres a year; he was the brother of a member of the Parliament, and was a prominent advocate of Jansenist doctrines. However erroneous his theology, no one could deny the sanctity of his life; he gave all that he had to the poor, slept without coverings, eschewed meat, and subsisted on vegetables. Worn out by such austerities, in 1727, the deacon died in the odor of sanctity, and was buried in the little cemetery of St. Médard. There his remains rested quietly for a while, but erelong rumors circulated of miraculous cures worked on those who sought relief at his grave. Soon the cemetery was visited by increasing throngs, and persons of all ranks were attracted to the place. The cures became more frequent and more extraordinary. A woman who had been an invalid from infancy, hardly able to walk by reason of her infirmities, and so often in grievous plight that she had been bled three hundred times, and had two hundred times received the last sacrament, made her neuvaine by the tomb of the saint. As she completed her ninth day of prayer, she found herself restored to full strength; she returned home, and amazed her neighbors by running briskly up five flights of stairs to her apartment.[1] The lame walked, the deaf heard, the paralyzed were restored to vigor, and this succession of marvelous cures became the chief theme of conversation in Paris. Not only could the saint heal the faithful, he showed also his ability to punish scoffers. A woman conceived the idea of making sport of his powers; pretending to be lame, she arrived at the cemetery, and in the presence of the crowd threw herself on the ground by

[1] *Dissertations sur les miracles opérés au tombeau de Monsieur de Paris.*

the tomb, as was the custom of those in search of relief. Her impiety was soon exposed, for presently she began to lament aloud, and ask God to pardon her wickedness; she was raised from the ground, and it was discovered that her mouth was twisted awry, and one side had become paralyzed; thereupon she confessed that her purpose had been to pretend a cure and then expose its falsity, and her sin had been punished by this grievous affliction. This act of righteous vengeance was vouched for by numerous witnesses, among them priests and members of Parliament, and the house was not able to hold the crowd which rushed to see the unfortunate woman who had so rashly doubted the powers of the blessed deacon.[1]

Miracles worked by Jansenist remains found no favor with the ecclesiastical authorities; they were declared to be impostures, and the Archbishop of Paris forbade his parishioners to pay their devotions to an unauthenticated saint. Such prohibitions were of no avail; the populace declared the miracle worker to be a saint without waiting for the canonization of the Pope, and portraits and lives of the Blessed Deacon Paris circulated in defiance of the authorities.

The church of St. Médard stands in a remote part of Paris; in bad weather the approach was difficult, and as the faithful walked about the little cemetery, they often sunk in mud to their ankles. Notwithstanding such trials, the church was crowded from five in the morning until dark; no storm discouraged the people, and they stood patiently in the rain, praying to the saint and watching those who had come in search of cures. Those about the grave sang with

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, ii. 171 *et seq.*, and numerous contemporary pamphlets.

fervor, while the tomb itself was always covered by the sick and lame, prostrate upon it, and beseeching relief; when some one arose and declared himself restored to health, the multitude burst into a Te Deum, and the crowd followed the man who had been cured through the streets amid resounding cries of "Miracle, miracle."

It was not only the vulgar who showed their veneration for the new saint; on one morning fifty carriages were counted about the church, and the owners of them, among whom were two duchesses, were saying their prayers within. Even so great a person as the Princess of Conti, a kinswoman of the king, came to St. Médard in search of relief. She did not find it, but as she had been blind for years, and only visited the tomb in person on the first and last days of her neuvaine, leaving it to others to pray for her between times, either the severity of her affliction or the slackness of her devotion might explain the failure.

The Jansenists found comfort, not only in the miracles worked by one of their own number, but in the failure of their opponents to furnish a rival. The death of the Deacon Paris was followed by that of a priest equally renowned for asceticism and life-long piety, and who had been so bitter an opponent of Jansenism that he died without the sacrament, rather than receive it from the hands of one tainted with that heresy. But no miracles marked his grave; a life of eighty years spent in the severest practices of religion did not secure for his remains the miraculous powers which the Almighty bestowed on the bones of the blessed deacon.

The manifestations at the cemetery of St. Médard,

as is wont to be the case, increased in violence. Many who visited the tomb fell into convulsions; they asked to be beaten and trod upon by the bystanders; persons lay on the ground uttering wild cries and incoherent prophecies; scenes were enacted that were disgusting and indecent. It was not so much the scandal of such performances, as their Jansenist origin, which at last led the government to interfere. In January, 1732, a royal ordinance declared that the cemetery of St. Médard should be closed, and all persons were forbidden to enter it.[1] As the faithful approached the scene of their devotions on the 29th of January, they found it surrounded by soldiers, who turned them away, and this guard was strictly maintained. On the following day, a famous paraphrase of the ordinance was attached to the door of the church. "By order of the king, God is forbidden to work miracles in this place."[2] The prohibition was respected: no more miracles were wrought in the cemetery of St. Médard; the relics of the blessed deacon occasionally effected a cure, but the lame and the halt no longer came to be healed, and the excitement slowly abated.[3]

[1] Ordinance of January 27, 1732.

[2] Barbier, ii. 246.

[3] *Rélations de la guérison de Marie Elisabeth Giroust.* These alleged miracles and the excitement produced by them are described in many contemporary pamphlets. Barbier's journal contains full accounts of them, and his comments are a fair illustration of the views of intelligent Parisians. Barbier was naturally skeptical, and was inclined to question the cures, but he was not quite sure that they were imaginary.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WAR OF THE POLISH SUCCESSION.

For some years Fleury succeeded in keeping France at peace, though it needed adroitness, good judgment, and a placid temper to avoid hostilities without sacrifice of national prestige, amid the varying complications of Continental politics. On February 1, 1733, Augustus II., called the Strong, and more renowned for his gallantries than for his wisdom, died and left the throne of Poland vacant. In every other European kingdom the hereditary form of monarchy was firmly established, but Poland had not shared the political development of Europe; her government, instead of growing in orderly efficiency, had reached a condition of administrative paralysis. Not only did the nobles elect their king, but they had stripped his office of power, and their order, in which all authority was vested, was unruly, lawless, and unfit either to govern or to be governed. Surrounded by states in which centralized forms of administration had made steady progress, Poland was not far removed from chronic anarchy, and her dismemberment might well have been anticipated long before it was accomplished. Whatever our sympathy with a nationality that was torn asunder by unscrupulous neighbors, the condition of Poland was long such as to make this result possible and probable.

In view of this, it is interesting to watch one of the last elections of a Polish sovereign, to see the

operations of a government which was soon to perish from the community of nations. In 1704, Stanislaus Leszczynski, a Polish nobleman, had been chosen king of Poland. His election was due to the friendly influence of Charles XII., then at the height of his victorious career, and after the disaster of Pultowa, when the Russians espoused the interests of Augustus II., Stanislaus fled from his country, and for many years he was a wanderer. At last he found rest in the little city of Weissenburg; the French furnished him shelter, and he led an obscure and tranquil life, devoted to his family, active in piety, and giving to the arts and sciences the attention which he had once bestowed on schemes of ambition.

There seemed little probability that Stanislaus would be drawn from this tranquil retreat to become again a prominent figure in European politics, but for the second time a sudden change of fortune overtook him, and in 1725 his daughter was chosen to become the wife of Louis XV. While the French ministers were content with the daughter of a deposed king as the bride of their monarch, they had no wish to involve France in endeavors to increase the dignity of her family, and it was plainly stated in the negotiations for the marriage that Stanislaus must not expect France to aid him to regain his throne. A fugitive monarch was in no condition to dictate terms, and moreover Stanislaus had a placid and contented mind; it is doubtful whether he preferred the stormy existence of a Polish king to the comfortable lot that was assured to the father-in-law of Louis XV. He was given the magnificent château of Chambord as a residence, and there for many years he enjoyed a tranquil splendor. When Augustus II. died, the

claims of Stanislaus were again advanced. The ex-sovereign was not strenuous in pressing them, and if his son-in-law had declined to assist him, Stanislaus would probably have been content to smoke his pipe and pursue his studies amid the beauties of Chambord. But the French minister at Warsaw at once began scheming for the election of Louis XV.'s father-in-law as king of Poland, and to these endeavors the French government, with much misgiving, promised its assistance.[1]

For almost two centuries France had furnished candidates for this office, though when we consider the remoteness of the country and the nominal authority of the sovereign, it is difficult to see wherein a French king of Poland could be a valuable ally. In 1572, the Duke of Anjou was chosen to the office, and abandoned the dignity when he became Henry III. of France. In the next century various princes of Condé and of Conti aspired to the Polish throne, though the influence of France was not sufficient to secure the election of any of them. It was, therefore, in accordance with traditional policy to seek now for the election of a sovereign who, if not French in race, was closely allied to the French king.

So far as the Poles were concerned Stanislaus was an acceptable candidate; he was Polish by blood and the member of an ancient and illustrious family; he had once been their sovereign, and had been driven from the throne by foreign armies; he was a man of

[1] The letters of Chauvelin in the early part of 1733, *Aff. Etr., Pologne*, show he realized that even if Stanislaus was elected, it would be difficult for France to sustain him on the throne of a remote country. (Letters of May 22, July 7, etc.) These apprehensions became more pronounced as the time for the election approached.

amiable character and personally popular. None of these considerations, however, would have gone far towards securing his election. Poland had already reached the condition where her sovereign must be supported by some foreign state; the Polish nobles chose the king, but it was beyond their power to maintain him in his office. Stanislaus had been raised to the throne at the command of Charles XII., and had been deposed by the army of Peter the Great. Russian and Saxon armies were now gathering at the frontier. Austria and Prussia were interesting themselves in the choice of a new sovereign, and these powerful neighbors would not respect the selection made by the Poles unless it was acceptable to themselves.

For another reason the personal qualities of the candidate were of little importance. The Polish nobility was as corrupt as it was turbulent and unruly, and the election of a Polish king was a scene of more scandalous bribery than is witnessed in days of universal suffrage. The liberty demanded by a Polish noble, it was said, was the liberty to sell his vote, and the French minister, an adroit man and well versed in Polish politics, informed his government that if it was desired to secure the election of Stanislaus, money must be supplied with a liberal hand. "The election of Stanislaus," he writes, "can only be secured by money, which is the great incentive for everything in this country." And he declared that six or seven millions would be needed to insure the result.[1] "Formerly," he said sadly, "one could buy

[1] Monti to king, February 26, 1733, *Cor. de Pologne, Aff. Etr.* All the details in reference to Stanislaus's election I have taken from the correspondence in the French foreign office, which has

a Pole for a moderate sum, but this is no longer so."[1] In the ignoble intrigues which now began we find the bearers of the most illustrious names in Polish history engaged in trafficking for their votes, — the Poniatowskis, the Raczynskis, the Potockis, the Oginskis. Some demanded offices; a few scrupled to take money, said the minister, and would be pleased to receive jewels and watches of value, but the true Pole preferred specie.[2] Some admitted that it was shameful to sell their votes, but they pleaded that such was the custom, and that an election was their harvest time.[3] The ambassador of the emperor was also at Warsaw, and there was great excitement in the capital when two wagons, attended by a strong guard, and loaded, it was said, with money to be used at the election, were driven to his residence.[4] Those who were willing to sell themselves once might be tempted to sell to both parties, and the French minister was instructed to be liberal in his promises, but so far as possible, to defer the time of payment until the votes had been cast.[5]

In such a contest as this the French were apt to be successful; their diplomatic agents were usually men of adroitness, energy, and experience, and France could furnish a large amount of ready money with

not before, I think, been examined on this question. It gives much information as to the condition of the Polish nobility and of the Polish government at this time.

[1] Monti to king, February 1, 1733; to Chauvelin, April 11.

[2] Letters of Monti of April 11, May 29, July 8, etc., *Cor. de Pol.*

[3] Monti to king, March 1, 1733. "C'était l'usage et le tems de leur moisson."

[4] *Cor. de Pol.*, lib. 204–208, *pas.*

[5] *Ib.*, 202, 136, *pas.*

more promptness than any other Continental country. Nearly eleven million livres were sent to the Marquis of Monti, more than half of the annual revenues of the kingdom of Prussia at this time, and the larger part of this great sum was used in purchasing the support of the Polish nobility for the candidacy of Stanislaus.[1] It was not used in vain. Monti secured the influence of the most powerful members of the Polish aristocracy, and Stanislaus, who had been loath to leave Chambord until his election was assured, now traveled through Germany in disguise, and in September, 1733, arrived at Warsaw, where the Polish Diet had convened to elect a king.

The spectacle presented by this assembly could be paralleled nowhere else in the world. In the great plains by the Vistula, sixty thousand Polish nobles were gathered, each of whom not only had the right to vote at the election of a sovereign and on all other questions of importance to the state, but by his single veto could check any action of his associates, and paralyze the republic; they were arrayed in a magnificence which rivaled the splendors of the courtiers of Versailles, though their dress indicated the freer life to which they were accustomed, and their closer connection with the east than with the west of Europe; they were proficient in all feats of arms, perfect in their skill as horsemen, fierce in their impatience of control, proud of their independence, and strongly attached to the country which their lawlessness was ere long to bring to final overthrow.

Amid all this chivalric splendor a regard for vulgar interest was by no means unknown; now that they

[1] See Mém. of December, 1733; *Cor. de Pol.*, letters of Monti of June 1, 1734, etc.

were on the eve of the election, the pressure on the French minister for material aid, in return for support of his candidate, became constantly more severe. He was besieged by people asking for money; they followed him into his chamber to press their demands, and threatened to espouse the interest of the other party unless their pay was forthcoming.[1] But Monti had sufficient money and sufficient adroitness to keep his hold over this unruly multitude.

It was whispered about that Stanislaus, their past and their future sovereign, had actually arrived at Warsaw, and, though as yet he was kept in seclusion, the knowledge of his presence encouraged his followers. All was now ready for the election, and the manner in which this was conducted savored of the romantic picturesqueness which was always the charm, and often the weakness, of Polish institutions. The primate of Poland was the official charged with the duty of collecting the votes, and this great ecclesiastic was a cavalier bearing little resemblance to some plump bishop ambling about on his episcopal palfrey. Mounting his horse the Archbishop of Gnesen rode in hot haste from one palatinate to another, bidding them name their choice for sovereign of the republic. So great was the number that, though he was seven hours on horseback, he was unable to complete the rounds, but on the following day the task was accomplished. He returned to a tent where the chief officers were collected, and from which floated the great standard of the republic. This was soon surrounded by deputations from the palatinates, all mounted and demanding vociferously that a king should be named.

[1] Monti to king, September 9, 1733, *Aff. Etr.*, 208. "Jamais la cupidité n'a été portée à la pointe qu'elle est," he writes.

In response to these outcries the primate at last appeared, and asked those present if they would have Stanislaus for their king. They all replied yes. This question was thrice repeated, and upon the third reply the primate said, "It is as you will it, and I declare Stanislaus Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland." This was greeted by a discharge of guns by the horsemen. No sooner had the proclamation been made than the new king appeared and showed himself to his followers. He had been careful to array himself in the national dress, and, followed by a great concourse, he proceeded to the cathedral, where the Te Deum was sung amid the booming of cannon. A small party was opposed to the choice, but no one ventured to proclaim the traditional veto which technically would have defeated the election; those opposed contented themselves with leaving the electoral field and riding off to join the Russian forces.[1]

Thus Stanislaus was elected to the Polish throne with the good will of a majority of the Polish people, but it was soon shown how unimportant was their choice and how powerless was the Polish government. The sixty thousand nobles, when they had satisfied their enthusiasm by firing guns and displaying their horsemanship, returned to their homes; the king found no money in the treasury, and there were no means of raising any regular sums by taxation; there was no army deserving the name; an organized Polish army had not gathered together since John Sobieski led them to the rescue of Vienna.[2]

[1] A full account of the election, alike its formalities and its secret workings, is given by the French ambassador. *Cor. de Pol.*, lib. 208, letters of September 12, 15, etc.

[2] Monti to king, December 24, 1733.

On the other hand, the influence of Russia in Polish politics steadily increased, and as the government of Poland became more disorganized, it was the easier for a foreign power to deal with that country as a subject state. The Russians had gathered a considerable army to compel the election of a king who would be in their interest; they now advanced rapidly upon Warsaw, and Stanislaus had absolutely no forces with which to oppose them. Ten days after his election he fled from Warsaw at midnight, and found refuge at Dantzic. The Russian army, thirty thousand strong, advanced to Warsaw without resistance. It was easy to find factions who would espouse any cause; another election was held, and the Elector of Saxony, the candidate of Russia and of the emperor, was declared king as Augustus III. He was supported by foreign troops, and was obliged to ask no aid from his Polish followers, nor did he meet with any opposition from those who had advocated the election of Stanislaus. In January he was peaceably consecrated at Cracow as king of Poland.

In the mean time Stanislaus remained at Dantzic, imploring the French to come to his aid. The French ministers had foreseen difficulties in supporting their candidate, but they were somewhat surprised when they realized the entire absence of any organized government in this ill-fated kingdom. Their representative wrote that if the French could send an army, it was possible that the Poles would rally about it, but without foreign aid nothing could be expected from Poland. "I am sorry we did not know long ago," Chauvelin replied, "that we must count the Poles absolutely for nothing, and must ourselves take the whole burden of the war."[1] Such was, however,

[1] Chauvelin to Monti, January 13, 1734.

precisely the case. It was impossible for the French to send to a country a thousand miles distant an army that could successfully oppose the forces of Russia, Austria, and Saxony. Louis announced that he should regard an invasion of Poland as an act of hostility against France; his remonstrance was unheeded; the allied armies continued their advance, and war was declared forthwith. This was of little service to the unfortunate Stanislaus, who remained in Dantzic, very infirm in body and very low in mind, finding for the second time how perilous an honor it was to be the king of Poland.

In the spring of 1734, the Russian army advanced to Dantzic and laid siege to the place. The citizens were friendly to Stanislaus, but they had no desire to endure a bombardment when it was certain that the city could not long resist without foreign aid. It was soon plain that no sufficient assistance would be furnished. The French tried to obtain an army from Sweden, but the endeavor was not successful. Frederick William of Prussia was appealed to, but his interests were with the other side; he offered to furnish a retreat in case of need upon his usual terms, that he should be given a certain number of tall soldiers, but he was not inclined to expose his giants to the danger of being shot.[1] At last the French sent a small reinforcement of about fifteen hundred men with a few ships; they arrived at the mouth of the Vistula, but were unable to reach Dantzic. A Russian fleet of twelve sail presently made its appearance on the Baltic, and the French contingent was forced to surrender.

Thus Stanislaus was left entirely helpless. Of sixty

[1] Monti to king, November 12, 1733.

thousand nobles who had gathered on the electoral field, there were few who came to the assistance of the sovereign they had chosen. Indeed, it was almost impossible that they should; there was no organization for an army, no money with which to pay troops or purchase provisions. "We have," said the French minister, "neither powder, nor ball, nor troops, nor generals;" and a little later he wrote with a just though a tardy recognition of the actual condition of things, "This tragedy will soon be finished."[1]

Though the Russians did not press the siege of Dantzic with much vigor, the condition of the town soon became desperate; bombs were constantly falling in the streets, the country about was laid waste, and the citizens were unwilling to expose themselves to entire ruin in a hopeless cause. Stanislaus was a humane man, and was loath to involve his followers in further disaster, but it was now difficult to make his escape, and he was justly apprehensive of the fate which might await him if he fell into the hands of the Russian troops. He resolved, however, to make an attempt at flight, and to seek a refuge in more orderly lands. Various offers of assistance were made him by a people always ready for acts of daring. One lady, he says, like a true heroine, even offered to take him away as her husband, but he declined to involve both her and himself in the perils of such an expedition, and a little before midnight on the 27th of June, 1734, he made his escape from Dantzic in the disguise of a peasant. The country around was flooded, and Russian parties were patrolling it as best they could, on the lookout for the fugitive, and arresting and examining every peasant whose height

[1] Monti to Chauvelin, April 7, 1734.

and appearance corresponded to that of the king. For ten days Stanislaus wandered over the marshes, environed by dangers and with Russian camps almost constantly in view. Sometimes he and his party made their way in boats, and again they had to walk through mud, sinking in it to their knees. He lay for some hours concealed in the garret of a peasant's house, listening to the talk of a party of Cossacks who had taken possession of the rooms below. At another time, as he chanced to look for a minute from the window, he saw some Russians guarding their horses not twenty paces away. The men who undertook to assist his escape were rascals of the most pronounced type, and the only comfort the fugitive found was in the society of a bankrupt merchant who was also engaged in making his way from Poland. His followers were alarmed at the dangers in which they were involved and afraid of the vengeance of the Russians, and his only resource, he writes, was in the brandy with which he was supplied: when he furnished it sparingly to his attendants, they saw in advance perils which they refused to encounter; but when it was handed around with sufficient liberality, they were ready to lead him right through the Russian camps. After many trials the party at last got over the Vistula, and, by professing to be a butcher in search of cattle and making liberal agreements to purchase of the farmers, Stanislaus succeeded in inducing them to transport him across the Prussian frontier.[1] There he was in safety, but any chance of wearing the Polish crown was forfeited by his flight from the country; the war which nomi-

[1] An account of Stanislaus's escape from Dantzic, written by himself, is found in *Cor. de Pol., Aff. Etr.*

nally began to make Stanislaus king of Poland was continued with a different purpose.

Louis XV. had declared that he would protect Poland in her rights; the election of Stanislaus was naturally recognized by France as the lawful choice of the Polish people, and when the Russian armies, acting in harmony with the emperor, invaded Poland and chased the king from his capital, the French were forced to regard this as a cause for war, or abandon the position they had taken. No one thought of doing the latter. Chauvelin, the minister for foreign affairs, was an ambitious man, and full of plans for remodeling Europe; the nobility were to a large extent officers in the army, and always in favor of a war policy, and Louis was anxious to secure a kingdom for his father-in-law. Fleury indeed, now as always, viewed war with apprehension, and wished to gain for his administration the mild fame of a period of tranquil prosperity, but he was not the man to stem any strong current of popular feeling.

On the 10th of October, 1733, a solemn proclamation stated the wrongs perpetrated by the emperor in interfering with the liberties of the Polish people and affronting the French king their protector, and war was declared upon Austria. A French army at once crossed the Rhine, but the only important military operations were in Italy. No sooner was it apparent that hostilities with Austria were inevitable than the French endeavored to obtain Sardinia as an ally against that power. Charles Emmanuel III. was now king of Sardinia, a prince who in courage, in acuteness of intellect, in a judicious ambition, and in entire indifference as to the means by which he advanced it, resembled a long line of illustrious ances-

tors. His father, Victor Amadeus II., had shown himself the equal in ability of any European sovereign; by wisely choosing when to espouse and when to discard the alliances offered him, he had succeeded in shaking off the tutelage in which Louis XIV. sought to hold him; he had added largely to his possessions; he had ceased to be merely a Duke of Savoy, and had received the more sounding title of King of Sardinia. In 1730, Victor had reigned for fifty-eight years, and whether he was weary of the burdens of state, or wished to marry a lady, whom for lack of sufficient rank it would have been unseemly to declare a queen, in September of that year he amazed his subjects by abdicating the throne in favor of his son Charles Emmanuel. His retirement was attributed by some to a desire to live in acknowledged wedlock with his new wife; except for this consideration, wrote the French minister, the king's conduct would have been nothing less than heroic.[1] Others said that Victor had promised support to both Spain and the emperor in their Italian quarrels, and a dread of complications led him to abdicate; but the king of Sardinia had betrayed both sides all his life, and was not apt to be dismayed at the results of any double dealing at that late day. At all events, he retired to the château of Chambery; there, he said, with his wife, a valet de chambre, two cooks, and a moderate income, he would lead a happy life as a country gentleman.[2]

If such was ever his purpose, within a year he changed his mind. It had been hinted that when he

[1] Blondel to Chauvelin, September 4, 1730, *Cor. de Turin, Aff. Etr.*

[2] Conversation with Blondel, reported by him, *Cor. de Turin.*

abdicated in favor of Charles Emmanuel, he prudently obtained from his son a promise to vacate the throne should the father again wish to fill it. If Charles had made any such promise, he did not feel more bound by a family agreement than his father had been by covenants with foreign powers. In the autumn of 1731, the old king showed a desire to resume his former position; he held conferences with his son's ministers, who had formerly been his own; he complained of his son's ignorance of the art of government, and manifested a strong desire to get possession of the abdication which he had signed. Charles had announced to the world that his father had renounced greatness in order to devote his remaining years wholly to God, and he did not intend to have this statement falsified. A detachment of soldiers proceeded by night to the château where the ex-king was; they forced their entrance, found him in bed, and presented an order for his arrest; he refused to obey, and his wife threw her arms about him to protect him from his enemies. This exhibition of matrimonial devotion was without avail; some grenadiers seized the wife and bore her off, lightly clad, but struggling vigorously; the officers dressed the king, put him in a carriage, and he was carried under a strong guard to the castle of Rivoli. The son expressed fears lest his father in some fit of excitement should commit violence on himself, and to ward off such dangers he had him kept in a room with heavily grated windows, and under the surveillance of guards who never allowed him out of sight.

The respect for monarchs was strong in Europe; they were still hedged about by a certain sanctity, and the announcement that the old king of Sardinia, the

grandfather of Louis XV., had been arrested by his son and was kept in close confinement bade fair to excite international complications. The French felt that they could not allow such conduct to pass unnoticed, but to their demands for explanation, as to all similar requests, Charles Emmanuel replied that he had been reluctantly driven to this step by the unfortunate mental hallucinations of his father and by the danger of public disturbance. No foreign nation felt sufficient interest to interfere, and Victor Amadeus remained a prisoner in close confinement in the castle of Rivoli until his death.[1]

If Charles Emmanuel was not a dutiful son, he was a good politician, and when the French applied for his aid against the emperor, he decided that the interest of Sardinia lay in espousing their cause; from them he could certainly obtain liberal promises of reward, for, as the sagacious rulers of his house had long discovered, Milan was most freely offered by those to whom it did not belong; even if the payment did not equal the promise, it was apt to be more than Austria would surrender from her patrimony in return for his aid.

There were many difficulties in agreeing on the terms of a treaty, and these arose, not from what France wanted for herself, but for her protégés. At first the French did indeed ask the cession of Savoy

[1] "Et ce Victor, attrapé, tour à tour,
Par son orgeuil, par son fils, par l'amour,"

wrote Voltaire. The account of his abdication and subsequent conduct is taken from the letters found in the *Correspondance de Turin*, 1730, 1731, *Aff. Etr.* Also a memoir found in *Mém. et Doc. Sardaigne*, *Aff. Etr.*, written by a former minister from Sardinia to England. The writer, though well informed, endeavored to justify in all respects his present master.

as compensation for their services in winning new territories for the king of Sardinia, and if they had been willing to give him all that he asked in Lombardy, it is not improbable that he would have made the bargain.[1] But the French were forced to withdraw their claim for Savoy because they were so persistent in their demands for the infante; on this occasion, as during innumerable diplomatic controversies in the century, the interests of France were sacrificed to obtain something for the Bourbon princes of Spain.

The demands now made were exceedingly distasteful to the king of Sardinia. It was one of the unfortunate results of the Spanish alliance that not only was Spain too infirm to be of much assistance, but by espousing her interests France excited the animosity of allies who would have been of more value; the establishment of the Spanish Bourbons in Italy alienated the House of Savoy; by allying herself with a weak and decaying monarchy, France aroused the ill will of an active and growing state. The efforts of Elizabeth Farnese to obtain Parma for her son had not been looked on by Savoy with a friendly eye, but in 1731, Don Carlos at last took possession of the provinces secured for him. Though the old Victor was kept in rigorous captivity, he had lost none of his interest in the national development which his sagacious policy had done so much to further, and he regarded the establishment of the infante as a menace to the future growth of Savoy. "If my plans had been followed," said the old man, "Don

[1] Vaulgrenant to Chauvelin, May 23, 1733, and *Cor. de Turin*, *pas.*

Carlos would never have set foot on Italian soil without bloodshed."[1]

It was one of the schemes of Chauvelin, as later it was one of the dreams of Argenson, that the Austrians should be driven out of Italy, and that country no longer be ruled by some foreign state, but by princes who would dwell among their people. The House of Savoy was quite willing that Italy should be freed from foreign rule, but if Austria was to be dispossessed, it was that Sardinia should take her place; it was no part of the aspiring policy of the rulers of Piedmont to expel the Austrians in order to replace them with Bourbon princes, who, with France for a protector, might prove far more uncomfortable neighbors. It was, therefore, with a bad grace that Charles Emmanuel heard the French demand a share of the Austrian possessions for the Spanish princes, and he refused absolutely to relinquish in their favor his own ambitions in Northern Italy. If the Spanish must have something, he preferred to let Spain herself take Naples and Sicily; he knew the weakness of that government, and he was sure that possessions held by so infirm a power would not prove a serious hindrance to the development of Sardinia.

It was to no avail that he made such suggestions; it was not for Spain that Elizabeth Farnese intended the Spanish soldiers should go to war; the French said plainly that only by the offer of advantages to the queen's children could aid be obtained from the country which was nominally ruled by Philip V.[2] It was with reluctance that Charles Emmanuel at

[1] *Cor. de Turin*, 164, 24, letter of May 26, 1732.

[2] This question is much discussed in the correspondence of Fleury and Charles Emmanuel, *Cor. de Turin*, 160. See, also, letters of Chauvelin for 1733, *Aff. Etr.*

last consented that France might conquer Naples and Sicily and the Tuscan ports, and give them to Don Carlos, for whom French influence and his mother's exertions had already secured the duchies of Parma and Piacenza. As a compensation for giving away what did not belong to him, Charles received the promise for himself of the whole of the great duchy of Milan, the aid of forty thousand French troops, and a liberal subsidy. In September, 1733, the treaty of Turin was signed. All that the French obtained by it was the permission to conquer some additional territory for Louis XV.'s cousin.[1]

If Charles was unwilling to see the children of the Spanish queen established in Italy, she was still more irritated that any of the possessions of Austria should be given to Savoy. She regarded them all as the future patrimony of her own offspring, and, unlike her sagacious rival, she would not accept the actual situation and wait for time to furnish new opportunities. Fleury had long been regarded with aversion at the court of Madrid because he would not involve France in war in support of the claims of Don Carlos, and though the prospect of obtaining Sicily and Naples was welcome, yet Elizabeth would not agree that Milan should go to the king of Sardinia.

It was true, indeed, that the duchy of Milan belonged to Austria, and it was easier to say who should have it than to take it from its present owner, and it was equally true that it would be a most formidable undertaking to attempt conquests in Italy against the opposition of both Austria and Savoy. These reflec-

[1] The treaty of Turin is found in *Cor. de Turin*, 160, 166–180. Some slight exceptions from the Milanese are not important. Savoy was to have the duchy as it was granted to Philip II.

tions did not affect Elizabeth's views; she had that absolute confidence in the accomplishment of her purposes which is often found in those whose desires are strong. The establishment of her sons as rulers over most of Italy was the object of her life; for this end she knew she could command whatever resources Spain had, and she strenuously demanded the aid of France as a duty that country owed to the uncle of her king.

The relations between France and Spain have been much discussed, and such weight has been attached to the famous series of family compacts, alike by statesmen and by political writers, that it may be well to consider them and their results. Bourbon princes on the Spanish throne, it has been asserted in this century quite as stoutly as in the last, were a tower of strength to France, and therefore a menace to Europe; those who are willing to study the facts may decide that France would have been better off if no Bourbon had ever ruled at Madrid.

In the later years of Louis XIV.'s life, to place one of his descendants on the Spanish throne was the chief object of his ambition. Such was not the policy of the early part of his reign. During thirty years the king pursued with more or less of wisdom and success the course marked out by Richelieu and Mazarin; he did not seek to make remote conquests, nor to place his family on foreign thrones: he sought acquisitions for France that would enhance the difficulties of foreign invasion, and that could be amalgamated into a powerful and homogeneous nationality. These had been the traditions of French national growth, of which the French monarchy had long been the faithful exponent, and with such a policy France

had expanded until the duchy of Hugh Capet had become the most powerful kingdom in Europe.

The increase in monarchical authority, which had in many regards been advantageous to the development of France, came in time to hinder instead of foster the national growth. The king had been the visible embodiment of the conception of national unity, and it was necessary that he should be freed from the harassing interference of nobles whose aims were personal or local; a king was not in condition to add Alsace or Franche-Comté to France when his attention was absorbed in enforcing order in Brittany or reducing Guienne to obedience. But the conception of the king as a national leader changed in time to that of a monarch ruling by divine right, a superior being, for whose glory or pleasure his subjects were bound to sacrifice their fortunes and their lives. It was a natural result of this new theory that royal ambitions should tend to become dynastic rather than national, and that advantages to be gained by the nation of which the king was ruler should sometimes be forgotten in an endeavor to increase the splendor of the family of which he was head.

During the course of the seventeenth century there were frequent alliances between the reigning families of France and Spain. In 1615, Louis XIII. married Anne of Austria, the daughter of Philip III. of Spain, and at the same time his sister was married to the prince of the Asturias, the future Philip IV. Such ties were drawn still closer in the next generation; in 1660, Louis XIV. married his cousin Maria Theresa, the daughter of Philip IV., and a few years later Charles II., the son of Philip IV., married a niece of Louis XIV., the beautiful Louise d'Orleans.

How numerous were the ties between the rulers of the two countries at this period is shown by the varied relationships of Charles II. to Louis XIV.: he was his cousin, his brother-in-law, and his nephew by marriage.

These alliances illustrate of how little importance to nations are the ties of kith and kin among their rulers. Eighty-five years passed from the first double marriage between the houses of Spain and France to the death of Charles II., and during more than forty years of that time France and Spain were at war with each other; the ties of relationship, no matter how intricate, did not insure peace and amity. In the eighteenth century Spain proved a costly ally, but in the seventeenth century she was a very profitable opponent; it was more advantageous for France to despoil her as an enemy than to assist her as a friend; as a result of the various wars against Spain in that century, France obtained the cession of the great provinces of Franche-Comté, Artois, and Roussillon, and a large part of the Spanish lowlands, territories which now contain almost one tenth of the population of the French Republic.

The marriage of Louis XIV. with Maria Theresa was the most important, in its results, of the numerous alliances between French and Spanish monarchs. When the marriage was arranged, it seemed not improbable that Maria would ultimately become heiress to the Spanish throne. She was therefore required to renounce her rights, but it was easy to argue that the renunciation was invalid, and it was certain that no instrument, whether more or less valid when invoked in courts of law, would be allowed to control ambitious sovereigns or settle the fate of nations.

Louis XIV. always asserted his wife's right as a pretext for his wars with Spain, and by virtue of them, when supported by superior armies, he obtained from his father-in-law and his brother-in-law Franche-Comté and much of the Netherlands.

When it became apparent that Charles II. would die childless and the great question of the Spanish succession would be opened, Louis agreed to waive the claims of his offspring in consideration of Lorraine and Guipuzcoa and some of the Italian possessions of Spain, and therein he acted for the true interests of France. But Charles was induced by his counselors to nominate Louis's grandson as his successor, and in an evil day for his own fame and for the interests of his kingdom, the French king decided to accept the perilous legacy; he sacrificed the interests of his kingdom to the aggrandizement of his family. Philip V. had not much more French blood in his veins than Philip IV.; when he left France he was a youth of seventeen, and a very dull and immature youth besides. Yet the accession of a Bourbon prince to the throne of Spain was regarded as a menace to the liberties of Europe, and a long war followed in the effort to prevent it. The disasters which that war brought upon France are well known, but it resulted in the establishment of the Bourbon line in Spain, and during all of the eighteenth century that country was ruled by descendants of Louis XIV. A study of the relations between France and Spain during that period tends to show that the sacrifices made by the French for the aggrandizement of the Bourbon family brought them no compensating advantages, and that France gained neither in power, nor trade, nor prosperity as a compensation for the

thirteen years of war that were required to place the grandson of Louis XIV. on the Spanish throne.

On the contrary, the establishment of the Bourbons in Spain seems rather to mark the period when the monarchy ceased to exert a beneficial influence upon the growth and development of France. Whether France had reached her natural limits, or whether her rulers were no longer fitted to carry on the work in which they had so long and so successfully been engaged, the eighteenth century, down to the time of the overthrow of the old régime, witnessed a decline in her political influence. In the sixteenth and still more in the seventeenth century the power of France had steadily grown; her territory had steadily increased in extent; during all the numerous wars in which she was engaged in the seventeenth century there was not one which terminated disastrously; there was hardly an important battle in which the French armies suffered a decisive defeat. Very different was the record of the following century. Lorraine was the only important acquisition which France made, and curiously enough, this was secured because Fleury saw fit to abandon the Spanish alliance and bargain for advantages for his own country instead of those which Louis had promised to get for Spain. In the war of the Austrian Succession the French armies won some brilliant victories, but any benefits that might have been derived from them were sacrificed to obtain an establishment for the Spanish infante. The Seven Years' war was among the most disastrous in the history of France; she secured the aid of Spain in the contest, and it added to her misfortunes; the only fruit of the "family compact" was the loss of Louisiana.

It is manifest, therefore, that a close alliance with Spain did not prove profitable to France, and a study of the various compacts between the rulers of the two countries will show that their object was usually the aggrandizement of Spanish princes in whose veins flowed Bourbon blood; that for this France furnished the means, and from it she reaped no benefit.

While the Duke of Orleans was regent, the two nations were not on intimate nor even on friendly terms, and within three years after the remains of Louis XIV. were deposited at St. Denis, the countries, which he believed the Pyrenees would no longer divide, were at war with each other. For many years the relations between France and Spain were as inharmonious as between any two European countries. This situation at last changed, and the long political friendship which followed was in no inconsiderable degree due to Louis XV. Inert as he was by nature, yet at times the king's influence on French politics was considerable; if he felt little concern in the prosperity of his kingdom, family feelings with him were strong: he had an exalted conception of the greatness of the Bourbons, and displayed a lively interest in the advancement of his kinsfolk.

The political principles which governed Spain during the time of the various family compacts, if not always wise, were entirely consistent. The Spanish showed as much willingness to treat with Austria, or England, or any other European power, as with France; they sought the ally which would offer them most.[1] The history of Spanish diplomacy showed

[1] "Unless France gives us aid," wrote the Spanish minister when a new establishment was wanted for Don Philip in 1743, "the king of Spain, abandoned by his friends, will throw him-

how vain were the apprehensions of those who feared that the ties of domestic affection between rulers would make Spain eager to expend her energies as a humble auxiliary of France. "We can obtain nothing from Spain through reason, or gratitude, or ties of blood," wrote a French statesman who had much to do with the negotiations between the two countries.[1]

The first family compact of 1733, which was followed by others of a similar nature, was entered into because Louis XV. was willing to agree on terms which the Spanish could obtain from no other sovereign; he made the interests of the Spanish princes his own; he promised to conquer for them kingdoms and principalities, and naturally the proffered help was eagerly accepted; but France gained nothing by imposing upon herself new and onerous obligations. The Spanish princes were regarded by the French kings as younger sons who must be provided for; as is often the case, their establishment in life proved a heavy burden upon the paternal estate.

The disadvantages of the Spanish alliance were justly estimated by Fleury, as that sagacious statesman reached the end of his long tenure of office. "There is nothing," he wrote, "that the queen of Spain would not sacrifice for the elevation of the Infante Don Philip. Reason and a sense of what is possible do not influence her views; passion alone controls them." "The greatest obstacles that we

self in the arms of his enemies." If France, he added, delayed in furnishing the succor promised, Spain must go elsewhere to find it. Mém. 1743, *Aff. Etr.*

[1] Mem. for office, Chauvelin, 1735, *Cor. d'Esp.*, *Aff. Etr.*, 428, 33.

find in our projects," he writes again, "come from the court of Madrid." "We must acknowledge that this additional crown for the House of Bourbon has done us far more harm than good."[1] The old statesman showed his usual sagacity when he declared that a Bourbon prince on the Spanish throne was a misfortune for France; that it would have been better for that country had the great alliance formed by William III. succeeded in preventing the grandson of Louis XIV. from ruling in Spain.

Years later, even Choiseul recognized the futility of the attempts to obtain any advantage from the Bourbon dynasty in Spain. "It is astonishing," he wrote, "that for sixty years Spain has been ruled by princes of the House of France, and yet it has never been possible to form a solid alliance between the two crowns."[2]

The French did not even receive commercial advantages as compensation for the aid they rendered their ally; they never obtained any greater privileges than were granted other friendly powers, and they did not always enjoy those. On the whole, the English profited most by the commerce with the Spanish colonies; they paid little heed to many of the prohibitions by which Spain sought to monopolize this trade for herself, while the French were more scrupulous about exciting complaints. Spain was treated by the government as an ally that must not be offended; if French traders suffered from the high-handed acts of Spanish officials, they got no redress; no tales about Jenkins's ears were allowed to appear and excite the

[1] Fleury to Tencin, December 5, 1741; April 24 and May 9, 1742.

[2] *Cor. d'Espagne*, 532, 91: 1761.

public mind against Bourbon princes. As for trade with Spain itself, from this all foreigners were excluded so far as possible, and French manufacturers were regarded with even more jealousy than those of England.[1] Spain has always been the most severe of the great European states in its protective policy; the rigor of commercial prohibition under Philip II. was not relaxed under Philip V.; even to-day Spain is a strict adherent of the protective doctrines which have been adopted in that country from time immemorial, though they have not yet developed home industries nor brought to the land wealth and prosperity.

Jealousy of French competition was shown in other ways than by prohibiting the importation of French wares and checking their trade with Mexico and Peru. Louisiana was regarded as a possible rival by the Spanish colonies, and so rigorous were the prohibitions against any dealings with it, that a ship from Louisiana could not anchor at Cuba, even in case of distress. As late as 1760, a French vessel stopped at Havana, and landed its captain, who was seriously ill. The governor ordered that he should at once be taken on board and the ship should set sail; he was told that the man's life was in peril, but he replied that the orders of the Spanish king were that no French ship coming from Louisiana could anchor at Havana, or receive succor from Cuba, no matter what the stress or need.[2] Even before Lou-

[1] "L'idée du gouvernement Espagnol est de se passer des étrangers," *Cor. d'Esp.*, 428, 225, and to this idea it has always remained true.

[2] An account of this matter is found in a memoir of 1761 in the *Archives des Affaires Etrangères.* The volumes of the *Cor. d'Espagne* are filled with the grievances of French merchants who suffered from the rigor of Spanish commercial regulations,

isiana was given to Spain as a compensation for the loss of Florida, Choiseul said it might be well to cede it to her in order to avoid the constant offense which the colony gave Spanish susceptibilities.[1]

During the time that Louis XIV.'s grandson was king of Spain, the desires and purposes of his wife are all that it is important to consider; nominally it was Philip V., a Bourbon prince, a Frenchman by birth, who administered the affairs of the country, but it is regarding form and not substance to say that he controlled Spanish policy, or that it was a Bourbon who ruled in Spain. During the last thirty years of Philip's reign, the absolute ruler of Spain, the person whose desires were law, who decided all questions of war and peace, who said in what cause armies should fight and with what states alliances should be made, was Elizabeth Farnese, by birth an Italian princess.

If France had given queens to Spain instead of kings, the hope might have been realized that the Pyrenees would no longer exist. Philip V. was weak as a youth, and was little more than an imbecile in maturity. His mental condition was not always the same; when his health was comparatively good, he was able to perform the routine duties required of a sovereign; he could receive ambassadors and hold levées, and, though his judgment was controlled by others, he could express himself with dignity and propriety. But he was often sunk far below the heavy dullness which was his best estate. His conduct then became so extraordinary that it can only be

and upon this official correspondence I have based what I have said about the trade between France and Spain.

[1] Choiseul to Orsun, July 31, 1761.

accounted for by a certain degree of mental alienation. He turned night into day; he breakfasted near midnight, and supped towards morning, and his meals were sometimes so prolonged that he would sit for nine or ten hours at the table; often he would remain for days in bed, refusing to have any intercourse with his ministers, and having for his only associate an ignorant domestic; and as he was jealous of any assumption of authority, without at least the form of his consent, the government at such times was almost paralyzed. The king sank into a condition hardly above that of an animal: he would not have his hair or his nails cut; he refused to change his linen, and wore one shirt for two months, until it became as black as a chimney; he refused to talk, and occasionally, through long interviews, would keep his fingers in his mouth to avoid any danger of breaking into speech. The queen said that he harbored the delusion that he was dead, and this accounted for his obstinate silence. As he ate enormously, and took little exercise, he grew very unwieldy, and it was with difficulty that he could walk, when he made the attempt. In fact, the condition of Philip V. was often not far removed from that of his uncle Charles II.; he inherited the diseased blood of the Spanish monarchs, and his natural defects were increased by the narrow prejudices and the benumbing etiquette by which a king of Spain was necessarily surrounded. Philip was superstitious, he was uxorious, he was greedy and overloaded his stomach with food, and what little intelligence he ever had was darkened and obscured.[1]

[1] This account of Philip's character and conduct is based upon the statements of those who saw him constantly, and were bound

If the condition of the monarch was bad, that of his kingdom was not much better; internal commerce and manufactures were at a low ebb; the trade with her extensive colonies might have been important, but from lack of capital and of business enterprise it was largely done through foreigners, and an unintelligent spirit of monopoly destroyed the benefits which could have been derived from it. It was in vain, said a well-informed observer, that the government sought to become rich without allowing its subjects a chance for profit, and Spanish trade, as it was conducted, was only a combination of privilege and brigandage.[1]

Nor was Spain any better equipped for war than could be expected in a country so far in arrears; the effective troops were not one quarter of the number shown on paper, and they were poorly paid and poorly disciplined. The navy was but a scarecrow; some of the sailors were beardless boys, others were the leavings of the jail or the products of the press-

to describe correctly what they saw. (*Cor. d'Espagne*, 370, 346; 371, 6; 372, 64, 183; 390, 351; 395, 79, 189, etc.) Similar accounts of his condition are found in the reports of all the French ambassadors at Madrid, during a space of twenty years; and also in letters from many Spaniards in the correspondence of the Austrian ambassadors, and in the *Dispacci Veneziani* of the well-informed Venetian ambassadors.

[1] These statements as to the condition of Spain are taken from numerous memoirs of various dates in the *Archives des Affaires Etrangères*, and they are confirmed from many other sources. The condition of Spain under Philip V. showed some improvement as compared with the time of Charles II., but it was still very bad. Under Charles III., the improvement was considerable, and far more substantial than the boasted progress made during the administration of Alberoni.

gang. "Their navy will be only a breakfast for the English," said a true prophet.[1]

This strange government was controlled by an Italian woman, who cared little for Spain and less for France; to arrive at their ends, the French minister lamented, their Catholic majesties would exhaust the treasures of France with the utmost indifference.[2] Notwithstanding this, there was a strong feeling that an intimate union should exist between the two branches of the Bourbon family; it had been a principle of Louis XIV.'s reign that such was the true French policy, and the traditions of the great monarch still exercised a large influence upon the French mind. Fleury had not been inclined to lend the strength of France to further the aspirations of the Spanish queen, but Chauvelin was now minister of foreign affairs, a man of ability, and filled with ambitious projects. As war with Austria became probable, the two courts were naturally drawn more closely together. Philip had a chronic desire for fighting, and this was encouraged by his wife in her eagerness to advance the interests of her children. A son of Philip by his first wife was living, and would succeed to the Spanish throne; Louis XV. had a son, and the possibility of a Spanish prince succeeding to the French throne was very remote. Kingdoms must therefore be found for the children of Elizabeth, or they would remain obscure princes, with little chance

[1] Mém. 1735, *Cor. d'Esp.*, 427, 406. "Jamais cette marine ne sera qu'un épouvantail et un déjeuner pour les Anglais."

[2] *Cor. d'Esp.*, 369, 230; 428, 33. "The interests of Spain are not those of the queen," wrote a Spaniard. "The queen will always sacrifice the more important interests of Spain for the smallest advantage she can obtain in Italy," said the French ambassador. *Ib.*, 390, 392.

of holding a prominent position in the world. One of them had indeed been made Duke of Parma and Piacenza, but this portion was not sufficient, and, moreover, she had another to provide for. The peaceful policy of Fleury had long been odious to the queen, and a war with Austria now furnished the opportunity she had desired. It was at once suggested that a close and intimate alliance between the two crowns should be formed, and to Elizabeth the idea of a combination that would procure for her sons the Italian possessions on which her heart was set was eminently acceptable.[1]

The advantages of the proposed treaty were chiefly on the side of Spain, but none the less the suggestion of such a measure was favorably received in France. Louis XV. was strongly attached to his family, and felt in efforts to increase the dignity of Bourbon princes an interest which he rarely gave to the welfare of his own kingdom. "We shall be charmed at anything which can cement a personal union between the two branches of the House of Bourbon," wrote Chauvelin.[2] "The king regards the interests of the infante as his own, and will gladly employ all our forces for his support and his glory."[3] When these views were held at Versailles, the negotiations for a treaty went on prosperously. It was to no avail that the French ambassador at Madrid suggested doubts as to the value of such an alliance. "We must consider," he said, "the condition of the government, the

[1] The course of the negotiations which led to the making of the first family compact can be followed in the *Cor. d'Espagne, Aff. Etr.*, t. 390 to 406, correspondence for 1732 and 1733.

[2] Chauvelin to Rottembourg, April, 1732.

[3] *Ib.*, August 19.

caprices of the queen, the rascality of the ministers, that they have neither money, nor credit, nor troops."[1] These suggestions were not heeded, and in November, 1733, the treaty of the Escurial was signed, the first of the so-called family compacts which so much disturbed Europe in the last century. This was, in the very words of the treaty, described as an "eternal and irrevocable family compact," and by it the French agreed that Don Carlos should have, in addition to his present possessions, Naples and Sicily, and that no peace should be made with Austria until this result had been secured. France agreed also to use her efforts to induce England to cede Gibraltar to Spain, to employ force for this purpose, if required, and never to cease her endeavors until Spain had satisfaction; the two governments were to consult together on all questions, but the only provision which the treaty contained for France was that her commerce with Spain should receive as favorable treatment as was given to any other nation.[2]

Both Louis and Elizabeth were disappointed in their anticipations; the objects sought to be secured by the first of the family compacts, like those of the similar treaties which followed, were not accomplished; the union of the two branches of the Bourbon family sometimes proved to the disadvantage of one of the parties, and sometimes to the disadvantage of both; least of all did this alliance bring about a result, the hope of which had excited the infirm brain of Philip V.; if the naval forces of the House of

[1] Letters of Rottembourg of August 2 and October 5.

[2] The treaty was kept secret, but it is found in the *Archives des Aff. Etr., Cor. d'Espagne*, 408, 44, *et seq.*

Bourbon were united, he said, this would destroy England.[1]

Before the treaty of the Escurial was signed, France had commenced hostilities; her armies crossed the Rhine and the Alps, and the war of the Polish Succession began. In this contest France had the co-operation of Sardinia and Spain, and it proceeded favorably for the allies. It was indeed an unequal conflict. The armies of Austria were not sufficient to protect her great possessions in Germany, in the Low Countries, and in Italy; her strength had been slowly but steadily diminishing, nor had any ruler been able to revive her declining energies. Charles VI., the present emperor, possessed no greater abilities than his predecessors for a century; he was a dull and obstinate man, impressed with the idea that the empire of which he was the head exceeded in power and greatness all its enemies, but unable to utilize what resources it had; he was not a warrior like Charles V.; he had neither the vigor of Ferdinand II., nor the qualities that excite popular enthusiasm, and which were exhibited by his heroic daughter. The French were better prepared for hostilities, and were eager to begin them. It was twenty years since France had been engaged in any war worth the name, and there had been no period of peace so long as this during the whole of the seventeenth century; the old soldiers were weary of tranquillity, the young men wished an opportunity to distinguish themselves, and the treatment which Stanislaus had received was regarded as an ample justification for hostilities. "Everybody is starting for the war," wrote Marais;

[1] Conversation reported in *Cor. d'Espagne*, 394, 21.

"the whole nation has gone crazy over it, and is eager to avenge the affront offered to our king."[1]

One might have doubted the vigor with which operations would be carried on from the maturity of those who were chosen to command them. It was not strange that Fleury, who was now over eighty, believed that men grew wiser as they grew older, nor that he chose generals who had already gained their fame, and were well past their youth. Marshal Berwick was given the command of the army of the Rhine; it was fifty years since he began his career as a soldier, and during a lifetime spent in fighting he had commanded the armies of England, France, and Spain. Villars, the hero of Denain, to whom was given the command in Italy, was still older in the service, and had reached the mature age of eighty.[2] But years did not always cool the ardor or the vitality of a French nobleman. Villars celebrated his progress by a series of balls in which he was not the least active of the dancers; he declared that in one engagement he was twenty hours out of the twenty-four on horseback; he was as ardent and as boastful as he had been all his life. "Tell the king he can dispose of Italy as he sees fit," he said. "I am going to conquer it for him."

The Austrians had equally mature generals: Prince Eugene, who commanded on the Rhine, was a man of threescore and ten, nor was Mercy, their leader in

[1] *Mém. de Marais*, 1733.

[2] Villars himself claimed to be a little younger: Villars to king, March 26, 1734. "J'ajouterai, sire, que je croyais l'année passée avoir 77 ans; il y a donc quelque apparence que j'en ai cette année 78." The marshal was at his ease in addressing his sovereign, as he was with all the rest of the world.

Italy, much younger, but their armies were far inferior to those of their adversaries. The emperor had believed that no one would venture to attack him, and though war had long been imminent, its outbreak found the Austrians wholly unprepared. There were only twenty-eight thousand men to protect the extensive Italian possessions which extended from the Alps to Cape Passaro, and they were wholly unequal to the task. Villars had little trouble in justifying part of his boast; the French and Sardinian armies met with no serious resistance, and in less than two months the whole of the great duchy of Milan had been conquered. On the 1st of December, 1733, Charles Emmanuel made his triumphant entry into the city of Milan. It was his claim that he came to drive away foreign oppressors, to unite Lombardy with Piedmont under the rule of an Italian prince, and he at once assumed the title of Duke of Milan. More than a century later his descendant in like manner took possession of Lombardy as the representative of Italian unity, and was received with universal enthusiasm by a people who loathed their foreign rulers and demanded that Italy should belong to the Italians. There does not seem to have been a trace of such feeling in the early part of the last century; the doctrine of nationalities, which has since played so great a part in the history of Europe, was then wholly undeveloped in Italy, and had little influence in Germany. Not only were the people of Milan indifferent to the idea of exchanging a foreign ruler for an Italian king, but, on the whole, they preferred to be left as they were. A witness has described the entry of Charles into Milan, a strange contrast to the famous scene when Victor Emmanuel and Louis Na-

poleon entered in triumph one hundred and twenty-six years later. A Te Deum was sung in the cathedral by order of the conqueror, but there was no joy among the people; they stood sullenly about the streets, and looked with averted gaze upon the troops entering their city; the most of them felt that they would be as well treated by the emperor as by the king of Sardinia, and they wished no change.[1] But if the people were not enthusiastic, they were passive; they offered no resistance, and the Austrians had no forces with which to resist.

The campaign on the Rhine was less important than that of Milan; the French captured Kehl, and in the year following Philipsburg was taken after a long and tedious siege. The empire declared war upon the French, but, as was usually the case with that inert body, the declaration proved of small importance, and the states of the empire furnished little aid to their chief.

In the south, however, events took place which had more permanent results than the easy victories of Villars. Late in 1733, the Spanish forces landed in Italy. Spain, Sardinia, and France were nominally engaged in the expulsion of the emperor from the Italian peninsula, but the queen of Spain had refused to accede to the treaty between France and Sardinia, and her soldiers were now bidden to give no heed to their nominal associates, and to devote their attention to conquests of which her children would have the fruits. It was in vain that Villars advised the union of the various armies in order to prevent the Aus-

[1] Fontanieu to minister of war, December 12, 1733. The Venetian Foscarini noticed the same thing, and spoke of the terror and gloom with which the city was filled.

trians sending reinforcements into Italy; the Spanish would not coöperate with the French, nor obey the orders of Charles Emmanuel, and their entire army at once turned its forces southward to conquer Naples for Don Carlos.[1]

The result of this undertaking appeared problematical; the Spanish army was small at the start, and it melted away on the march, until it was little over twelve thousand strong when Naples was reached. It seemed presumptuous to attempt the conquest of two kingdoms with a handful of men, but the effort was crowned with success. If the Spanish invaders were weak, the Austrian defenders were weaker, and the people were more friendly to the new rulers than to the old. It was only a quarter of a century that the Austrians had ruled at Naples, and their administration was not popular; Spanish agents promised that, under Don Carlos, odious imposts should be abolished, and popular privileges restored, and they gained adherents for him in all classes. These promises of reform might not be fulfilled, but the success of Don Carlos assured one change that was welcome to the people: he was not endeavoring to make of Naples a province of Spain; he was to be their own king; they would be governed by a monarch dwelling among them, instead of by the viceroy of some distant state. As his little army drew near, the population rose in his behalf; the scanty Austrian garrisons could offer small resistance; they were defeated in a battle, and were glad to make their escape north. On the 15th of May, 1734, Don Carlos entered Naples amid the genuine enthusiasm of the people over whom he was to rule. Sicily offered no more resistance

[1] Villars to king, April 22, 1734.

than Naples; Don Carlos became the king of the Two Sicilies, and founded another line of Bourbon sovereigns.

Curiously enough, the dynasty thus established was still upon the throne of Naples, when the parent stock, the French Bourbons, had been finally expelled from the throne of France. During one hundred and twenty-seven years Bourbon princes reigned in Naples, except when driven from their place by the French themselves. Unfortunately, their rule was not as beneficial as it was prolonged; Don Carlos himself, the first of the line, was also the best; his successors constituted the most retrograde and bigoted branch of the Bourbon family, and when they were at last driven from the throne, it was to the delight of their subjects and with the approval of Europe.

The conquest of Naples was the most important achievement of the war. The campaigns on the Rhine were wholly unproductive, nor were the operations in Italy, after the first victories of Villars, more important in their results. It was not because the forces were insufficient, but because the leaders were inharmonious, that no progress was made. Charles Emmanuel had possession of Milan; any further conquests in Italy he knew would be for the Spanish princes, and he would do nothing to forward their interests. Elizabeth Farnese was equally resolved that she would do nothing that could prove of assistance to the king of Sardinia. As the Austrians abandoned the Two Sicilies, in 1735, the Spanish army made its appearance in Northern Italy, but its presence there proved a hindrance rather than a help.

The Spanish refused to act under the orders of

Charles Emmanuel, and insisted on laying siege to Mantua, which they hoped to add to the possessions of the infante; but if Charles could not have Mantua for himself, he preferred that it should belong to Austria; he would not assist in the siege, and thereupon the Spanish declined any longer to pay the subsidy which they were bound to furnish.[1]

The progress of the war was hindered also by the death of the great generals who commanded at its beginning. The exposures of the Italian campaign proved too much for a man who had passed fourscore years, and in June, 1734, Villars closed his long military career. As he lay on his death-bed in Turin the news came that Marshal Berwick, his lifelong rival for fame, had been struck by a bullet while in the trenches before Philipsburg and killed on the spot. "That man has always been more fortunate than I," said the dying soldier.[2]

While dissensions between the allies brought the war almost to a standstill, negotiations for peace were in active progress. England and Holland first endeavored to restore harmony, and proposed terms that were not very unfair, but were unacceptable to all parties. Meanwhile, secret conferences were held between the principal combatants. Fleury was always eager for peace, and he lost no time in replying to the overtures made by the emperor. In these negotiations the cardinal showed great sagacity and not much good faith. France was bound by treaties of alliance with Sardinia and with Spain. It was indeed easy to find grievances against both of her associates: Charles Emmanuel, when he had obtained

[1] *Cor. d'Espagne* for 1735.
[2] *Mém. de Villars*, 445.

what he desired for himself, would do nothing for any one else; the Spanish had from the first refused to assist in any operations, except such as were taken in their own interests, and as an effective alliance against Austria the coöperation of the three nations was a farce. Moreover, the queen of Spain was unreasonable in her demands, and Fleury said in his anger that he would not carry on war to please a woman's caprice.[1] Thus he had some justification for agreeing on terms without consulting his associates, but his procedure was not marked by any delicate sense of good faith. He was little disturbed by such considerations; the plan of taking Italy from Austria in order to divide it between the king of Sardinia and the children of Elizabeth Farnese was a scheme of Chauvelin; the cardinal saw in an increase of French territory a far more tangible advantage than in making Italian princes of the cousins of Louis XV.[2]

Early in 1735, the Austrian court intimated its desire for peace, and the cardinal at once sent trusty representatives to Vienna. With such secrecy were these negotiations carried on, that though they extended over several months, their existence seems to have been suspected by no one.[3]

[1] *Cor. d'Espagne*, 369, 25. Fleury denied making this remark, but probably he said it, and certainly he thought it.

[2] The Spanish gave notice they would no longer pay the subsidy (letter of Patino, October 12) on account of the refusal of Charles Emmanuel to supply cannon for the siege of Mantua. This letter came just in time to furnish the French a pretext for making the treaty with Austria, to which they had already agreed. See letter of Chauvelin to Vaulgrenant, October, 1735.

[3] For the negotiations as to this treaty, I have followed the correspondence in the foreign office. *Cor. de Vienne*, 1735, t. 180–185.

France and Austria each had a demand to make which was thought of essential importance, and fortunately for the success of the negotiations, their demands did not conflict. It was impossible to suppose that after Stanislaus had been chased from his kingdom, and his rival had for two years been in peaceful possession of the Polish throne, the French candidate would be allowed to rule over the country of which he had twice been elected king. Yet it was in behalf of Stanislaus that the French had declared war. The results of the contest had on the whole been decidedly favorable to them, and they felt that their honor was involved in making no peace unless Stanislaus was compensated for the loss of his throne.[1]

The emperor had an object in view to which he attached still greater importance. He had no son, and it had long been the chief object of his policy to secure for his daughter Maria Theresa the great possessions of the House of Hapsburg. By the Pragmatic Sanction, issued in 1713, he declared that his oldest daughter should succeed to the sovereignty of all the states ruled by him, should he die leaving no son, and for twenty years he sought to obtain from the European powers a recognition of the rights thus secured to her.

Thus far France had steadily refused to acknowledge the validity of the Pragmatic Sanction, and her relations were of the most friendly nature with the Elector of Bavaria, who was Maria Theresa's most serious competitor for the possessions of the Hapsburgs.

When the commissioners met in secret conference

[1] *Cor. d'Autriche*, 181, 148, *et pas.* Referat de la Conférence du 9 Septembre, 1735, from the Austrian records.

at Vienna, the French demanded substantial advantages for Stanislaus. The emperor was willing to accede to their requests, if he could obtain a ratification of his daughter's title in return. Free from the opposition of France, he believed that she could inherit in peace what he wished should be hers. The French asked the duchies of Bar and Lorraine for Stanislaus, as compensation for his resignation of the throne of Poland, and such an arrangement would not only satisfy the honor of France, but would redound to her advantage; Stanislaus's only heir was the French queen, and therefore upon his death both duchies must go in absolute sovereignty to France.[1] Over neither of them had Charles VI. any rights, except the vague authority of the empire, but the young Duke of Lorraine was the cousin of Maria Theresa, and had been selected as her husband. As he was to receive from the hands of Charles the heiress of greater states than Mary of Burgundy or Isabella of Castile, he was sure to accede to plans which were for the advantage of the imperial family. He was not asked to surrender his duchy without compensation. In those days states were handed about without reference to the wishes of their inhabitants; the Grand Duke of Tuscany was old, infirm, and childless, and the great powers of Europe had already decided that he should be succeeded by one of the Spanish infantes, who were chronic applicants for all vacant duchies or thrones. This arrangement was now changed without the formality of consulting

[1] The statement often repeated and adopted by Martin that Fleury was content with Bar, and Chauvelin's interposition secured Lorraine, is shown to be erroneous by an examination of the correspondence at the foreign office.

the Spanish queen, and Tuscany was agreed upon as a compensation for Lorraine. The exchange was not an unfair one, but it could not be without regret that the House of Lorraine consented to surrender their ancient possessions; for seven hundred years they had ruled in that duchy; it had been subject to them almost as long as the Isle of France to the House of Capet. It was now agreed that the duchies of Bar and Lorraine were to be ceded to Stanislaus for his lifetime, and that upon his death they should be incorporated with France.[1] Thus Lorraine at last became French, and so remained until it was conquered by the Prussians more than a century later. Its destinies had long been controlled by France, and its condition was improved by incorporation into that kingdom. It had been subject to French domination, without being entitled to the benefit of French protection; at the beginning of this war, as often before, the French had at once taken possession of the duchy; they had demanded of its inhabitants supplies for their troops, fodder for their horses, magazines for their ammunition; the cession now made changed an occupation by might into a possession by right. In return for the acquisition of this rich and prosperous province, the French agreed to guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction, and no one can deny the bad faith of French statesmen when a few years later they failed to keep their word. "The cession of Lorraine," Fleury himself wrote, "is a sort of compensation for the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction," and in almost as explicit terms this was stated in the

[1] The articles first signed did not give Stanislaus possession of Lorraine until the death of the grand duke, but this condition was afterwards modified.

articles signed by the representatives of France and Austria.[1]

When these two great questions were satisfactorily arranged, there was little trouble in agreeing on other matters. The French did everything in their power to obtain favorable terms for their allies, except manifest a determination to fight for them; as a result, while Charles Emmanuel and Don Carlos got something, it was a good deal less than they had hoped for, or than had been agreed upon in the treaties made between France, Sardinia, and Spain. Don Carlos was indeed recognized as king of the Two Sicilies, and he was given besides the ports on the Tuscan coast, but in return for this the duchies of Parma and Piacenza, which he already held, were ceded to Austria, and his rights to the succession of Tuscany were transferred to the Duke of Lorraine. Don Carlos was left king of a rich and populous country, but his other possessions, with which his mother expected to make her second son a powerful prince, were unceremoniously taken away. The larger part of the duchy of Milan was surrendered to Austria, and Charles Emmanuel had to be content with a modest portion of the coveted territory. As a concession to French pride, the legality of Stanislaus's election was recognized, but he was forthwith to resign his office, and Augustus III., who had long been king in fact, became king *de jure* as well.

Stanislaus was allowed to retain the title of king of Poland with whatever precedence that secured for him. Title and rank were nearly all there was to the Polish monarchy, and as Stanislaus exchanged a

[1] Fleury to La Baume, September 11, 1735, *Cor. d'Autriche*, 181, *pas.*

nominal authority over an unruly people for a comfortable life and an ample allowance in Lorraine, he had no reason to be discontented.

On the 3d of October, 1735, articles containing these terms were signed at Vienna. Long deliberation was required to settle all the conditions, and not until 1738 was the treaty of Vienna signed, but save in unimportant detail it followed the secret agreement made between France and Austria in 1735.[1]

The unpleasant duty now devolved upon the French of notifying their allies that terms had been fixed for them without the formality of consultation. It was not an agreeable task either at Turin or at Madrid, but the minister who had to meet the wrath of Elizabeth Farnese was most commiserated. It was her anger that was feared, and not that of the king, for the insignificance of the rôle of Philip V. appears even in the most casual references to Spanish politics. "We must expect discontent from our allies," Chauvelin wrote the emperor, "and especially from the queen of Spain."[2] "We are sincerely sorry for you, because you will have to announce this news," the minister said to the Count of Vaulgrenant, whose duty it was to face the lioness in her den.[3] There was ample reason to anticipate an unpleasant quarter of an hour, for the Spanish queen had a temper of extraordinary violence, and, when excited by opposition, her voice was raised, her face was flushed, and

[1] The treaty of Vienna was not ratified by Spain and Sardinia until 1739. The articles signed at Vienna in 1735 are found in *Correspondance de Vienne*, 181. The course of these negotiations I have followed in the official correspondence of the *Affaires Etrangères*.

[2] Chauvelin to emperor, November 18, 1735.

[3] Chauvelin to Vaulgrenant, October 27, 1735.

she poured out a stream of vituperation; even her favorite minister planned in what manner disagreeable news could be conveyed to her with least danger of a scene of violence, and expressed great relief when any such occasion passed without exciting a torrent of abuse that would have done credit to a fishwoman.[1] As for poor Philip, no one was disturbed by him; when any startling announcement was made, he kept close watch of his wife's face, and regulated his conduct accordingly.[2] On this occasion the French minister escaped more easily than he had anticipated. The queen was deeply disappointed that her ambition for her sons could not be gratified, but she indulged in no burst of passion before the minister; she contented herself with treating him with an icy civility. Indeed, disappointed as were both Elizabeth and Charles Emmanuel at the terms of the treaty, they recognized the fact that they could hope for nothing except with the aid of France; if their ally would do no more, though they might repine, it was useless to resist. Spain and Sardinia sullenly acceded to the terms agreed upon for them, and with unimportant alterations these were incorporated into the treaty of Vienna.

The war thus ended had been brief, and from a military standpoint had not been notable, but it resulted in important and permanent changes. A Bourbon line of princes was established on the throne of Naples; the House of Savoy extended its posses-

[1] There are innumerable references to such scenes in the French correspondence, and there were frequent interviews with the Spanish minister, Patino, as to how they could be avoided.

[2] See an account of such an interview given by the Bishop of Rennes in 1743. *Cor. d'Espagne*, 475, 124, *et seq.*

sions somewhat in Lombardy, and though the gain was not important, yet the princes of that family never loosed their hold on what they had once obtained, and each new strip of territory served as a basis for further advances. Lorraine was annexed to France, and strengthened her frontier along the Rhine; it was the last acquisition made by the French monarchy on the Continent, and closed the long process of territorial aggrandizement begun under Hugh Capet. Though the treaty of Vienna contained provisions which guaranteed to Poland her liberties and the right to a free election of her kings, yet the events of the war showed, more distinctly than had before been seen, the subjection of that country to her powerful neighbors; the war of the Polish Succession hastened the political decline which at last resulted in the dismemberment of Poland. So far as the great powers of Europe were concerned, France emerged stronger from the struggle and Austria weaker; the preponderance of France in European politics seemed assured; but Louis XV. had still over thirty years to reign, and during that long period the heedlessness, the inefficiency, and the corruption of the administration greatly lessened the influence of that country.

The annexation of Lorraine to France was accomplished without delay. In 1737, Stanislaus took possession of his new government, and he forthwith turned over to the king of France the revenues and the administration of his duchies. All that he reserved for himself, it was said, was to insure the happiness of his subjects, and so far as lay in his power, he did this with a fidelity equaled by few sovereigns. For thirty years he ruled over Lorraine, and he was a very king of Yvetot.

Stanislaus was allowed by the French government an income of two million livres; the sum was not large for one who was expected to display the state of a sovereign prince, but under his prudent care it was more than enough. In all Europe there was not so well ordered a court: there was no waste, there was no plundering; each month all bills were paid, — nothing was ever allowed to stand over the appointed day; Stanislaus was the only monarch who was never in debt and never in need of money.

With all his thrift he maintained the dignity of a ruler; he had his companies of guards, a grand marshal, a grand master of the house, chamberlains, gentlemen in waiting, forty valets, twenty-four cooks, and a mistress, but his dislike for pomp allowed him to dispense with many costly officials.[1] A gentleman in the employ of the former Duke of Lorraine applied to Stanislaus for a similar position. "What was your office?" asked the monarch. "I was master of ceremonies," replied the gentleman. "Alas," said the king, "I never allow any one even to make a reverence before me." His was a model court. At nine every night, when the dukes and marquises of Versailles were ready for the gambling-tables, Stanislaus and his courtiers went peaceably to bed.

The king conversed affably with every one; he rode about the country attended by a single groom; no monarch was so easy of access. He delighted in pleasures which showed an amiable, though not, per-

[1] His mistress, the Marquise de Boufflers, indited for herself the well-known epitaph : —

"Ci git dans une paix profonde
Cette dame de volupté,
Qui pour plus grande sureté
Fit son paradis dans ce monde."

haps, a profound mind. He had a dwarf, and in the days of the Encyclopedia, few kings condescended to be amused by dwarfs. Bébé was a prominent figure at this simple-minded court. On one occasion a great paté appeared on the table, and from it emerged the dwarf, armed cap-a-pie, who proceeded to perform his evolutions, to the delight of all except one gentleman, whom he hit on the nose with his spear.[1] The king had an artificial waterfall constructed, in which he took great pride. When the water was turned on, cocks crew, a cat pursued a rat, a hermit beat his breast, a cart man drove his cart, to the delight of guests in an age less sophisticated than ours.[2] The king had other ways of amusing himself. He spent many hours puffing away at a pipe six feet long; he compounded new dishes, and donning his apron, with an attendant to assist him, he concocted an imitation Tokay, which was thought to possess much merit, and a bottle of which many years later, either on account of its maker or its quality, sold for forty francs. But Stanislaus was a scholar as well: he loved to talk philosophy with men of learning; he wrote answers to Rousseau's sophisms; he published essays on political questions, which unfortunately few ever bothered to read; he issued dissertations on the proper conduct of kings, and exemplified them in his own life.

Moderate as was his income, he had much for splendor and much for charity. He built extensively, and made Nancy a handsome city; he constructed palaces and churches and hospitals, tearing down sometimes, for his improvements, buildings which we

[1] Noël, *Mém. pour servir.*

[2] The Duke of Luynes has described his wonder and delight at this piece of mechanism.

should think more interesting and more beautiful; but such was the fashion in the eighteenth century. He established institutions of learning and of beneficence; he had his little academy at Nancy, in imitation of the great academy at Paris; he gave liberally to the poor, founded a hospital for infirm soldiers, endowed a public library, supported twelve Jesuit missionaries, and gave portions to eight daughters of needy noblemen, on which to marry. He established another charity which was his own invention, and intended to preserve his subjects from the voracity of lawyers; five counselors, men of learning and integrity, were paid a fixed salary, in return for which they were bound to give gratuitous advice to all who applied for it.

The little court at Luneville became a favorite resort for men of letters, who found in Stanislaus a hospitable entertainer and an agreeable companion. Montesquieu visited it, and Hénault and Helvetius; Voltaire made long stays there, and Mme. de Chatelet there met with the Marquis of St. Lambert and her death. When the kindly old king unfortunately set his robe de chambre on fire, and died from his injuries, his loss was sincerely mourned by his subjects, and this cannot be said of many sovereigns, who were more powerful and more wise.[1]

[1] Many accounts of Stanislaus's life in Lorraine are found in the memoirs of Luynes and Hénault. His official dealings with the government are contained among the documents marked Lorraine at the *Affaires Etrangères*. Noel, in his *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Lorraine*, while acknowledging Stanislaus's amiable character, says that his charities were not always wise, and that the administration of the French officials during his reign was often harsh, and this very possibly is correct.

CHAPTER V.

THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION.

After the close of the war of the Polish Succession, Fleury again enjoyed the tranquillity that was dear to his soul. With the exception of two years of bad crops, the country enjoyed a reasonable prosperity; the budget showed a surplus; though his enemies watched eagerly for the signs of approaching dissolution, the old cardinal, now nearing ninety, still held his power unimpaired, and he could look forward to a peaceful ending of a long and successful political career.

These reasonable anticipations were doomed to disappointment. In 1740, the Emperor Charles VI. was a man of only fifty-five; his health was somewhat impaired, but he might reasonably expect many more years of life. He had shown, however, more than ordinary solicitude in his endeavors to regulate the condition of his empire after he should be taken away. For almost five hundred years the House of Hapsburg had ruled in Austria, and for three centuries the imperial crown had been worn by Austrian archdukes. The possessions of this ancient and illustrious family had been increased by marriage and by conquest, but no effort had been made to mould into one nationality the scattered states which owed it allegiance. Such a task would have been difficult, and to some extent impossible. Even if Austria had manifested the genius for assimilation which has been a

chief factor in the greatness of France, no common feeling of patriotism would have united Germans and Bohemians, Hungarians and Italians. The states had been artificially joined together, and they might easily fall asunder; they were held by varied titles, by inheritance, conquest, and treaty, and there was hardly one of these scattered possessions to which other rulers could not advance plausible claims, on the failure of the male line of the House of Hapsburg.

Charles had no sons to inherit his throne, and his daughter Maria Theresa, was heiress of his estates. It was certain that the imperial crown could not be worn by a woman, but Charles hoped the electors would make choice of his son-in-law, the former Duke of Lorraine, now Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the dignity might thus be preserved to his family. He knew, however, that the hereditary possessions of his house were far more important than the sounding title of emperor, and for many years his energies had been devoted to obtaining the recognition of the claims of his daughter Maria Theresa. Apparently these efforts had been successful. France, Spain, Prussia, Russia, England, and most of the minor German powers had recognized her rights to the inheritance of her father; she had the agreement of many of these states to protect her against all enemies; if faith could be put in treaties, Charles might die in peace.

There was never a period when treaties were less respected or more lightly violated; it was a commonplace among diplomats that kings were bound by their agreements so long only as it was for their interest to observe them; and this maxim had long controlled the practice of European rulers. It had

recently found a conspicuous example in Louis XIV., who rarely observed a treaty to his disadvantage; it was to find its most illustrious exponent in Frederick the Great, who never did so.

Charles had been emperor for nearly thirty years; he was too familiar with the practices of other courts, and of his own, to feel sure that his daughter would be undisturbed in her inheritance, because the great powers of Europe had promised that she should be. But there were reasons of more weight than diplomatic signatures which might reasonably lead him to hope that no attempt would be made to despoil Maria Theresa. France had no interest in interfering; the time was past when she had any cause to fear the ascendency of the House of Austria, or when her safety demanded the abasement of that power: a policy which had been wise in the days of Richelieu would be folly in the days of Fleury. Wisdom was not always found in the councils of France, but Fleury was the head of the administration, and a long political career had proved his moderation and his good sense; his aversion to war was well known, his skill in averting it had been often shown, his influence would surely be exercised in behalf of peace. There was no reason to apprehend the hostility of England; that country would be more apt to exert itself in behalf of the House of Austria than in opposition to it. Spain had ratified the Pragmatic Sanction, but neither Philip nor his wife would be influenced by that fact; they would be eager to disturb the peace of Europe, if there was any prospect of obtaining Italian possessions for their offspring; but unless Spain was assisted by France, her hostility was not important. The Elector of Bavaria, almost alone among princes

of importance, had refused to recognize the Pragmatic Sanction.[1] He was ambitious for the imperial crown, he laid claim to some of the hereditary dominions of the House of Austria, and his claims were not altogether without foundation; he could assume a position of hostility to Maria Theresa without violating his faith, but the Elector of Bavaria was not a sovereign of sufficient importance to excite any apprehension in the heir of Charles VI. There seemed no reason why Russia should interfere. Prussia was ruled by a young king who was known to Europe by a book he had published in denunciation of the principles of Macchiavelli; it could not have been anticipated that he would become their chief exponent. He was, moreover, under a strong debt of gratitude to the emperor, whose friendly interference had tempered the capricious rage of his eccentric father, and whose ambassador had furnished him money which he had eagerly accepted.[2]

The value of treaties with the great powers of Europe was soon to be tested. Though the health of the emperor had been for some time declining, his condition was not thought to be alarming. He took a severe cold, and to this was added an attack of indi-

[1] In 1726, the Elector of Bavaria signed a treaty recognizing the Pragmatic Sanction, but the treaty had expired, and it had long been publicly announced that the elector claimed this instrument to be invalid.

[2] The common tradition that Frederick's life was saved by the interference of the emperor is a mistake. The Austrian ambassador did not present the appeal of his court for mercy until Frederick William had decided to pardon his offending son. But the knowledge that the imperial court would disapprove any such severity had its effect upon the irritable king. Lavisse, *Jeunesse du grand Frédéric*, 269, 313.

gestion from eating too freely of mushrooms; he grew rapidly worse, and after an illness of a few days, on October 20, 1740, he died. He was succeeded by his daughter Maria Theresa, who was then twenty-three years of age. The long anticipated failure of the male line of the House of Hapsburg was a reality; a woman for the first time was called upon to rule over the scattered dominions of that family, and it was now to be seen whether the powers of Europe would abide by their agreements and allow her to enjoy her heritage in peace, or whether they would attempt to despoil her of her possessions because they believed she was unable to defend them.

Any doubts on the subject were soon removed. The emperor died on October 20, and on the 26th the news reached Frederick II. at Rheinsberg. On the same date he wrote Voltaire, "I think by June we shall have more to do with powder and soldiers and trenches than with actresses and ballets and theatres."[1] The king decided on his policy with the promptness which characterized his extraordinary intellect; he at once resolved that he would take Silesia from Maria Theresa, peacefully if he could, and forcibly if he must. The report prepared by Frederick's order and dated October 29, three days after the news was received of the emperor's death, states explicitly that the king had decided to profit by the present prosperous condition of affairs and annex Silesia, this being the most favorable opportunity for the solid aggrandizement of Prussia which had presented itself for a long period.[2] Frederick was right in recognizing the importance of Silesia, and in deciding that this

[1] Frederick to Voltaire, October 26, 1740; *Œuv.*, x. 163.

[2] *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*, i. 74.

was the favorable moment to acquire it, and neither treaties nor good faith prevented him from seïzing the opportunity. Some feeble claims of right were indeed advanced, after Frederick had first taken the province by force. It is unnecessary to discuss them.

Silesia had long been in the peaceful possession of the House of Hapsburg; it had never formed part of Prussia; the claims of the House of Brandenburg on the most of Silesia had accrued eighty years before, and on other portions they were yet more stale; they had never been acknowledged, and they had been expressly waived by repeated treaties. Frederick William had ratified the Pragmatic Sanction, which secured to Maria Theresa all the possessions of her father, and recognized her title to Silesia as much as to Vienna; as has been truly said, if the titles of states or individuals can be disturbed after fourscore years of peaceable possession, there can be no peace for nations or private citizens.

These flimsy pretexts of legal right never for one moment influenced Frederick himself. When his counselors suggested that by certain treaties the House of Brandenburg had possibly renounced its rights, he wrote contemptuously on the margin of their memorandum, "The question of right is an affair of the ministers. . . . It is time to consider it in secret, for the orders to the troops have been given."[1] "My soldiers were ready, my purse was full," he said himself. "Of all the imperial succession, Silesia was the portion which was most useful to the House of Brandenburg."[2] "Take when you can!" he said

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, i. 91, Mem. of November 7, by Podewils.

[2] *Ib.*, 90. Idées sur les projets politiques formées au sujet de la mort de l'empereur, signed by Frederick, *Mém. de Voltaire.*

again; "you are never wrong unless you are obliged to give back."

It has been reserved for modern historians to trace the analogy between Frederick's procedure and the principles which he had laid down in the "Anti-Machiavel;"[1] their hero never made the attempt, and he would have viewed such an effort with contemptuous indifference. In truth, with Frederick the Great as with Napoleon, questions of morality and of good faith must be left out of the consideration. Frederick, as Macaulay truly said, was a tyrant "without fear, without faith, and without mercy." He left it for others to meditate on what was justified by legal right, or was consistent with good faith; he considered only the results of his acts upon his fame and upon the aggrandizement of his kingdom. He could say in his own defense that he was influenced by considerations of larger importance to posterity than whether a treaty was observed or a king's word was kept; the conquest of Silesia was an important acquisition for a state which has since become the most powerful in Europe. What Prussia gained, Austria lost, but such is the general law: the Roman Empire was not built up with any tender regard for the states which were absorbed in it; civilized peoples have conquered and exterminated inferior tribes, and the world is the better for it. The law of force is the ultimate one in society as well as in nature, and judgment must often be formed on an act from its results, but the endeavor to square the conduct of Frederick the Great with the Golden Rule or the Ten Commandments will never be successful.[2]

[1] "Er verfuhr nach den Maximen, die er im antimachievell ausgesprochen hatte," says Droysen, i. 154.

[2] The defense of whatever Frederick did and of the way in

Frederick's policy from the time he mounted the throne showed his desire to increase the power of Prussia whenever an opportunity should offer; he did not disturb himself about the balance of power in Europe; he knew that the one thing of importance was to get something for himself. To every court he proposed an alliance, but with the suggestion that his assistance could not be obtained gratuitously. His representative at Paris was instructed to say that Frederick loved France, yet, if he was neglected, that feeling might pass away forever. "If I am desired as an ally," he wrote to his minister in England, "I must be shown advantages which are real. Up to this time I see only general protestations of friendship."[1]

The death of the emperor furnished the opportunity which Frederick had desired. He at once resolved to seize Silesia, but during the brief preparations which were required he endeavored to lull the suspicions of the Austrian court, and sought allies wherever they could be found. If his private communications do not display a high sense of honor, they manifest a marvelous sagacity and adroitness. Podewils asks how Frederick's intentions shall be stated by his ambassadors at foreign courts. "At every court in a different fashion," writes the author of the "Anti-Macchiavel." "At London we must say that the Duke of Lorraine wishes to make terms with

which he did it has been nowhere presented with more learning and force than in Droysen's *Geschichte des Preussischen Politiks*. It is easier to agree with the eminent historian's judgment on Frederick's policy than on its moral quality. "Frederick II. fühlt sich moralisch befugt" to demand Silesia, he says, v. 153. The term "moralisch befugt" is not one which Frederick would ever have applied to himself.

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, 4; *Ib.*, 61, October 13, 1740.

France, and that I approach Vienna to force the Austrians to join the party of the maritime powers and of the Protestant religion. At Hanover, Mayence, and Ratisbon we must talk of a patriotic heart, and say that I wish to sustain the empire. As for the French, we must handle those miscreants with gloves." [1] While other powers hesitated about the official recognition of Maria Theresa, Frederick recognized her title at once. When rumors of his military preparations reached Vienna they excited little alarm. "He will be like his father," it was said, "who all his life was cocking his gun, but never let it off." "The queen will see how reasonable are my projects, and how pure are my intentions," he told her envoy; "assure her of my devotion."

All went favorably. Frederick had feared the interference of Russia, and when he heard of the approaching death of the Czarina Anna he could not restrain his joy. "The Empress of Russia is going to die," he wrote Podewils; "God favors us." [2] "Adieu, my dear charlatan," he wrote his minister a few days later; "keep a good countenance, give no signs, the bomb will burst in December." [3]

In December the bomb exploded, to the consternation of all Europe. Frederick entered Silesia at the head of his army, and conquered the province practically without resistance. Having done this, he directed his ambassador to offer his assistance to Maria Theresa, and to demand Silesia as the price.[4] He

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, i. 98–100. An den Statsminster Podewils, mém. signed by Frederick. The word applied to the French does not admit of literal translation.

[2] *Ib.*, 96, November 9, 1740.

[3] *Ib.*, 100, November 12.

[4] *Ib.*, 132 *et pas.*

acted upon his favorite maxim, he took first and asked afterwards. This unprovoked assault excited as much amazement in other courts as it did indignation at Vienna, but Frederick was right in thinking that it would excite very little else. "If the king acts thus," said the English ambassador at Vienna, "he will be excommunicated from the society of nations;" yet it was not long before England herself exerted every effort to secure for Frederick the province he had seized.

The character of Maria Theresa was as yet unknown, and Frederick was not without hope that she would cede the province for the sake of peace. "It can be seen," he wrote, just as he was to start for the invasion of Silesia, "that my intention has never been to make war on the queen of Hungary, but that I am ready to succor and assist her with all my forces in case of need." [1] He now wrote his ambassador at Vienna to impress upon the queen that he had entered Silesia in order that he might the better assist the House of Austria, and save it from the ruin with which it was threatened; if that province was ceded to him, he would agree to protect the other possessions of Maria Theresa against any invader, and to use all his influence to procure the election of the grand duke as emperor.[2]

While one ambassador was offering Frederick's vote to the queen of Hungary, others were equally busy in trying to find a purchaser for the same article elsewhere. Frederick had said that his vote for emperor was for sale, and he did not intend to have the price lowered for lack of bidders. At the same time, he

[1] Valori, December 12, 1740.

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, i. 220 *et pas.*

offered his support to the candidate of Austria and to the candidate of France; he was willing to defend the Catholic queen of Hungary, or to proclaim himself the champion of the Protestants whom Austria had oppressed, if only he could have Silesia as the reward for his alliance; if the pay was satisfactory, it was immaterial from whom he got it.

Frederick never equaled his literary preceptor Voltaire in the skill with which he could turn off alexandrines, but there are touches in his prose worthy of that great master of irony. It must have been with a complacent smile that he put in his letter to Fleury, "It depends on you to make the bonds which bind us eternal by favoring the justice of my claims on Silesia," while at the same time he was writing George II. of England, "If your majesty wishes to attach a faithful ally, of an inviolable fidelity, now is the moment."[1] While Frederick was making promises in every court which he had no thought of keeping, he confided to his own minister the principle by which his conduct was governed: "If there is anything to be gained by being an honest man we will be one; and if it is necessary to deceive, let us be knaves."[2] The king practiced with unusual skill the procedure which he advocated; he was willing to avow his principles, and he made no claim to virtues which he neither possessed nor cared to possess.

Maria Theresa received with indignation Frederick's offer to sell his assistance and take Silesia for

[1] To king of England, January 30, 1741; to Fleury, January 5, 1741.

[2] Frederick to Podewils, May 12, 1741. "S'il y a à gagner à être honnête homme nous le serons, et s'il faut duper soyons donc fourbes."

his pay; resolute as he was, he found in this young girl a character as determined as his own. The king seems to have been somewhat surprised and still more angered at her determination. Like Napoleon, Frederick was vexed when any one refused to do what he desired; resistance irritated him. "If the Duke of Lorraine wishes to destroy himself despite my good intentions, let him destroy himself," he wrote, when he was informed of the manner in which his propositions had been received. England refused to espouse his quarrel, and the only powerful ally left for him was France. Frederick was an enthusiastic admirer of French literature; he preferred the Henriade to the Iliad, and declared Racine superior to all his rivals of antiquity.[1] He had been reared on French philosophy, he spoke the French language in preference to his own, and yet there was no nation which he viewed with such unfriendly eyes as the French. He scoffed at all the world, but his tongue was never so bitter as when he discussed French statesmen and French generals. He told Podewils to play with France until it was certain that he could make no treaty elsewhere; alliance with the French must be the last resort.[2] He distrusted their policy, disliked their leaders, and despised their king, and his contempt was justified by the fatuity with which they lent themselves to his designs.

The attack upon Silesia was the crisis of Frederick's life; if he failed in that, his reputation was ruined; he would be held up as a monarch who had no more judgment than he had scruples, and his hopes of building up the power of Prussia would be dashed at the beginning of his career; he could obtain no

[1] *Histoire de mon temps*, i. 59.
[2] *Pol. Cor.*, i. 179 *et pas.*

other ally, and he now eagerly sought the aid of France.

We must now consider the reasons that induced the French government to violate its plighted vow, to seek the ruin of Maria Theresa, and to assist in strengthening the state which was to become the most bitter and most dangerous enemy of France. The news of the emperor's death excited the same agitation at Versailles as at Berlin, and the conduct of France at this crisis was as important to her future as was that of Prussia to hers; it was characterized by equal bad faith, and by much less political wisdom.

The war of the Austrian Succession was a turning-point in French history. The contest, which began in 1741, was not really terminated until the treaty of Paris in 1763; the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was a breathing-spell, the parties changed partners, but the war for the ruin of Prussia sprang from that undertaken for the ruin of Austria. During fourteen years hostilities were carried on in Europe, Asia, America, and on the great seas, and they were attended with results which have modified the history of the world. Most wars are barren of result; thirty years after their close, the parties to them are in the same condition as if they had remained at peace; the temporary waste of men and money has been repaired; all that remains is a little glory for a few, and the dim recollection of suffering among many.

The contest which now began had results of a different character. The position of France in the world was materially altered, and her opportunity to exercise a large influence in the development of America and India was forever lost. What France lost, England gained: English speech and English civilization

have spread over vast areas where those of France bade fair to prevail; France failed to obtain the position of a great colonizing power as a result of the war which she began in folly and bad faith.

The ultimate consequences of this contest have also altered her position in Europe. The unification of Germany under the leadership of Prussia might indeed have taken place if France had never given aid to Frederick the Great; the fact remains that in order to weaken a power which could never again have been dangerous, she helped to build up a state which now possesses the military ascendency on the continent that France once held. It would have been impossible for any statesman to foresee such a result, but none the less it was a lack of political wisdom which involved the country in hostilities against Maria Theresa.

It is not only in the loss of foreign territory and of external influence that we can trace the results of the war undertaken to weaken the House of Austria and continued to punish the House of Brandenburg. The French have always been jealous of their national reputation; no people have been more submissive under rulers who increased the national prestige; no people have been more impatient under rulers who were outgeneraled in battle or outwitted in diplomacy. Under what we may call the modern French monarchy, the line of kings who ruled after the feudal system had become a thing of the past, there had often been suffering among the people, the internal condition of the country left much to be desired, but the destinies of France as a great European power had, on the whole, been guided with wisdom and success. France had grown in power in comparison with

all her rivals; few of her wars ended disastrously; her victories far outnumbered her defeats; even the war of the Spanish Succession, begun by Louis XIV. for family aggrandizement, and attended with unwonted military disasters, had resulted in accomplishing the purpose for which it was commenced; however little France profited by this, it lessened any feeling of national disgrace. Monarchy in France was associated in the minds of the people with growth in power, victory in the field, the enlargement of French territory, the increase of French influence.

Under Louis XV. this feeling was weakened, if it was not destroyed. In the war of the Austrian Succession, though the French armies were often successful, the country gained nothing; the only fruits of years of strife were an increase of the national indebtedness and a weakening of the national influence. The Seven Years' war, which sprang from the half-extinguished ashes of the former contest, was far more disastrous. The French armies were defeated, the country was disgraced; it was forced to sacrifice its possessions, and to make an ignominious peace. Beyond all doubt, these calamities weakened the hold of royal institutions on the French mind; the monarchy became discredited; it was identified with defeat, with military disgrace, with the loss of national influence. Had the reign of Louis XV. been successful and glorious, the state of public feeling would have been far different when the royal authority passed to an amiable successor. The inglorious and unproductive contests which now began helped to destroy that reverence for monarchy which had for centuries been strong among the French people.

The arguments for war with Maria Theresa had

their foundation in a common phase of intellectual shortsightedness, the inability to recognize changes in the condition of affairs, and the belief, which is so widespread and often so pernicious, that what was wise for our forefathers must be wise for us, their descendants. It had been the aim of Richelieu and Mazarin to procure for France the ascendency in European politics which had been exercised by the House of Austria. Richelieu had taken part in the Thirty Years' war, and he had allied himself with Protestant powers in the endeavor to weaken the most formidable rival of France. These efforts had been successful, and their success was the reason that it was no longer the part of wisdom to pursue them. In 1640, Austria was a dangerous enemy to France; it was idle to assert that she was in 1740. In the century that had elapsed, the House of Bourbon had been steadily gaining in power, and the House of Hapsburg had been steadily declining. There could be no better proof of the weakened condition of Austria than was furnished by the war of the Spanish Succession. Long years of defeat and of internal distress had brought France to the verge of ruin; yet no sooner had the maritime powers made peace, than the emperor alone found himself unable to continue the contest with Louis XIV., and was forced to consent to the conditions of the treaty of Utrecht.

France under Louis XV. had nothing to gain by further weakening the House of Austria, and still less was it worth while to go to war in order to transfer the shadowy authority of the empire to some other family. It had long been apparent that the emperor, except as he possessed hereditary dominions, was little more than a myth. It imparted an additional dignity

to the king of Bohemia and the archduke of Austria if he also wore the imperial crown; it entitled him and his representatives to precedence at fêtes and pageants, but though it increased his dignity, it added practically nothing to his power. It was pursuing phantoms to waste blood and money that this glittering bauble might be transferred from the archdukes of Austria to the electors of Bavaria.

The news of the emperor's death was as unexpected at Versailles as at Berlin, but months passed instead of hours before France decided what course to pursue in this grave emergency. If only treaty obligations had been considered, there would have been no need for delay. The war with Austria had been closed by the treaty signed at Vienna in 1738. By this France recognized the validity of the Pragmatic Sanction, and agreed to protect Maria Theresa in her inheritance. This agreement was based on good consideration. The Province of Lorraine was surrendered to Stanislaus, and at his death it was to be annexed to France. It was an important gain. Lorraine was valuable from its wealth and population, valuable as a defense against invasion from the east bank of the Rhine. The acquisition of this province, long indeed under French influence, but now at last incorporated into the French kingdom, had been the crowning achievement of the administration of Fleury.

To the ordinary mind there could be no doubt as to the exact meaning of the treaty of 1738. No words could be clearer than those which were used. The French king promised for himself and his heirs "to defend with all his forces, to maintain and guarantee against any person whatsoever, whenever there shall be need, the order of succession which His Imperial

Majesty has established;" and yet during the negotiations for the treaty as well as after the death of Charles VI., questions arose as to the just interpretation of its terms. This provision, said the French, cannot affect the rights of other parties, it only guarantees the archduchess in the possession of what is lawfully hers; but if this construction was correct, the whole agreement amounted to nothing. It was to establish the title of his daughter against the claims of other persons that the emperor had issued the Pragmatic Sanction; if the guarantee only recognized Maria Theresa's right to what no one else claimed, it was not worth while to cede a province in order to obtain it.

That such was its meaning was, however, insinuated not only to the Elector of Bavaria, but to the emperor himself. Among all the German powers, Bavaria had been most closely allied with France. Even in the days of Richelieu and Mazarin, the plan had been suggested of transferring the imperial crown from the powerful archdukes of Austria to the friendly electors of Bavaria. In the war of the Spanish Succession the elector had remained constant to his alliance with Louis XIV., and had been driven from his dominions as a punishment. When peace was made, Louis insisted that his ally should be restored, and as a further reward for his fidelity, he made a secret treaty in 1714 by which he agreed to assist him to be chosen emperor, if there should be a failure in the male line of the House of Austria.[1] In 1727, a further treaty was made by which France promised to support the elector's claims to the kingdom of Bohemia if Charles VI. died leaving no sons, though still another treaty

[1] *Cor. de Bavière*, 1714.

signed in 1733 might perhaps be said to have restricted this agreement. It was, therefore, with dismay that the elector heard the French were to guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction as a condition of peace with Austria, and he at once protested against this abandonment of his rights. Fleury replied with the courteous finesse of which he was so perfect a master. France had no thought of abandoning her old ally, he wrote, but as the nature of the elector's claims was unknown, it was impossible to say how far they deserved support.[1] Thereupon the elector sent an envoy to Paris to explain his pretensions, which were derived from a daughter of the former Emperor Ferdinand I. The Austrians, on the other hand, suspecting the relations which existed between France and the elector, were anxious to have a secret article added to the treaty, which should in express words guarantee against any claims that might be made by him. This proposition Fleury avoided, and he even wrote to the emperor telling him of the pretensions now advanced by the elector's representative, and suggesting that some answer should be presented in order to throw further light on the question.[2] Such an answer was promised, but it was never sent; the treaty was at last signed with the guarantee of Maria Theresa's possessions in general terms, "against any person whatsoever," and the emperor seems to have felt that this was sufficient. So it was. Notwithstanding the suggestion cautiously thrown out by Fleury and not expressly contradicted by the emperor, that this guarantee could not affect the rights of third parties,

[1] Fleury to Elector, November 4, 1735, and December 7, 1736. *Cor. de Bavière.*

[2] *Cor. de Vienne*, 1735; *Ib.*, 1737, Fleury to Charles VI.

it meant that France would protect Maria Theresa against claims of whatever nature, or it meant nothing at all.

Immediately after the death of Charles VI. the representative of the Austrian court applied to Louis XV. for a recognition of the just title of Maria Theresa to the possessions left by her father. There is no doubt that Fleury desired to accede to this request. He had never loved war, he was now almost ninety years of age, and he wished to die in peace. He was aware also that France was in no condition for war; the crops had been poor, the finances were disordered, the people were distressed.[1] He knew that there was nothing to be gained by hostilities; the talk of completing the work of Richelieu by the final overthrow of the power of Austria allured shallow-pated courtiers, but he was too sagacious to be entrapped by such arguments. He at once wrote the Austrian minister, "The king will observe faithfully all the engagements he has made with your court," and if he had followed his own judgment, this would have been done.[2]

But Fleury was a very old man, and he had always shown adroitness of conduct rather than stubborn determination of purpose; amid the clamor which arose, the cardinal temporized; in an evil hour for his own fame he left the future to shape itself, and the course of events involved him in a policy which was as contrary to his own desires as it was to wisdom and good faith.[3]

[1] There are many references to the poor condition of the country in Barbier, Argenson, *Mém. de Luynes*, 1740; *Dis. Ven.*, 232, 479, *et pas.*

[2] Fleury to Lichtenstein, November 1, 1740.

[3] Almost two weeks after the news of the emperor's death,

Almost to a man, the nobility were eager for war. France had grown great, they said, by weakening the power of the House of Austria, and now was the time to complete the work; to neglect this opportunity would be to depart from the policy of Richelieu and Louis XIV., to lose the fairest occasion ever offered for establishing the country's preëminence in Europe. With few exceptions the nobles were soldiers: they were fond of fighting, they were eager for the distinction which might be gained in the field; ambition and the love of excitement were mingled with a blind adherence to what was supposed to be the ancient and established policy of France.

Among those who clamored for the overthrow of the House of Austria was a man possessing in an unusual degree the faculty of exciting enthusiasm and confidence, and who, for a brief period, filled one of the most prominent rôles in European politics. Charles Louis Fouquet, Count of Belle Isle, was a grandson of the famous Fouquet whose career had closed with sixteen years of imprisonment. A descendant of the disgraced financier had small chance of gaining the favor of Louis XIV. Belle Isle obtained promotion in the army as a reward for bravery, but it was not until the death of the old king that he began to push his fortunes at court. When there was at last an opportunity, he showed vigor and skill in making his way. He was tall, handsome, polite, insinuating, with boundless ambition and exactly the talents that were required to further it; he always pleased, and never gave offense; he was assiduous to

Fleury told the Venetian ambassador that France had guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction, and was bound to observe her agreement. *Dis. Ven.*, 232, 352.

the masters, and did not forget the valets; whether he met a minister of state, a Parisian bourgeois, or a parish priest, he was equally desirous of making a favorable impression.[1] The count knew the value of money as did his grandfather before him, and like many others he made his most successful speculations at the expense of the state. He succeeded in exchanging his island of Belle Isle, which yielded twenty-seven thousand livres of rent, for government lands which yielded one hundred and twenty-seven thousand, and he received half a million in money besides.[2] After the regent's death, Belle Isle was not in favor at court and was thrown into the Bastille, but he was soon released, and waited impatiently for an opportunity to satisfy a restless ambition. At last the occasion presented itself. In the discussions which followed the emperor's death, Belle Isle took a prominent part; France, he said, must now see that a friend was chosen emperor, and that the dangerous power of Austria was forever destroyed; this was the golden opportunity, success was certain, and the ruin of the House of Hapsburg inevitable. He was confident; he was eloquent: his speech and bearing seemed to indicate a man fit for great enterprises. "He eats little, sleeps little, and thinks a great deal, rare qualities in France," said an observer.[3] It was on every man's tongue that the policy advocated by Belle Isle must be the true policy to be pursued, and that the man to carry it into effect was Belle Isle himself.

If Fleury's courage had equaled his sagacity, he would have put an end to such plans; his influence over the king was still unimpaired, and Louis himself

[1] St. Simon, xvi. 166 *et pas.* [2] Barbier, i. 332.
[3] *Journal d'Argenson,* December 20, 1740.

showed on this occasion the political sagacity he always possessed, but which his indolence and indifference rendered useless to his kingdom. He declared that he would not interfere in the election of an emperor. "I will keep my hands in my pockets," he said, "unless they should want to elect a Protestant."[1] It was certainly the wisest thing he could have done. But Fleury was too timid to confront all those who loudly advocated a vigorous policy, and the king was too indifferent to interfere; he allowed his ministers to do as they saw fit, and contented himself with criticising their conduct.

While uncertainty and confusion prevailed in the councils of Versailles, the invasion of Silesia by Frederick secured the victory of the war party. The first blow had been struck, the Pragmatic Sanction had been disregarded, the dismemberment of the possessions of the House of Austria had begun; all now wished to join in the attack and share in the spoil. Spain and Saxony, the House of Savoy and the Elector of Bavaria, were all advancing their claims upon the succession of Maria Theresa, and were preparing to enforce them. Fleury abandoned his efforts to stem the current; propositions for an alliance came from Frederick, and they were favorably received. The cardinal complained bitterly and truthfully to the Austrian ambassador that he was driven to take a step of which he disapproved, and that his position was uncomfortable and miserable; but, like Walpole in England at a similar crisis, he would neither resign nor try further to resist popular clamor. The ambassador reported to Maria Theresa that the French would certainly refuse to observe the conditions of the

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, iii. 266.

treaty of 1738.[1] The queen wrote herself to Fleury, imploring him to be faithful to his agreements. "I wrote the cardinal," she said afterwards, "in terms that would have softened a rock." Fleury replied with his usual urbanity, but, despite his honeyed words, she saw that she could expect no help from France.

The French might, without incurring any serious reproach, have continued on friendly terms with the queen, while declining to involve themselves in a long and expensive war to repel her enemies. When asked to furnish troops to assist in reconquering Silesia, the minister of foreign affairs replied that the guarantee of France was based upon the agreement of the other powers, and she could not be expected to go to war to enforce the good faith of her associates, nor had there been any provision as to what aid should be rendered, what number of troops should be put in the field to fight the battles of Maria Theresa.[2] If the French had been willing to engage actively in her behalf, they could fairly have imposed terms for their assistance, and to them she would gladly have acceded. Repeatedly during the war Maria Theresa offered to repay the aid of France by ceding additional territory to strengthen her eastern boundary. The folly by which such offers were declined, and the blood and money of the country wasted without chance of advantage, is the grievous offense of which French statesmen were guilty.

[1] Letter of Wasner to Maria Theresa, cited in Arneth, *Geschichte Maria Theresias*, a most valuable book from the Austrian standpoint, as is Droysen's *Geschichte des Preussischen Politiks* for the Prussian authorities.

[2] *Dis. Ven.*, 232, 360, conversation of Amelot with the Venetian ambassador.

Instead of adopting a policy which would have been sagacious, and no more selfish than that of every other European power, it was decided to exert French influence in opposition to Austria in the coming election of an emperor. In this course there was indeed nothing contrary to treaty obligations; the French had never agreed to assist the husband of Maria Theresa in his candidacy, and they had promised to assist the Elector of Bavaria. But it was evident that France could not stop there; to aid the elector in his endeavor to be chosen emperor necessarily involved an effort to sustain his claims upon the hereditary possessions of the House of Austria. No sooner had Belle Isle obtained Fleury's reluctant consent to use the influence of France in the election, than he wrung the old man's heart by showing that an army must be sent into Germany to sustain this position.[1] Frederick disposed of the matter with his usual practical sagacity: "The cardinal is sadly deceived if he thinks he can succeed by negotiations. I tell you it is the strongest who will be emperor."[2]

On March 4, 1741, Belle Isle left Paris as representative of France to the electoral college. Even in those days, rarely did an ambassador display the splendor with which Belle Isle dazzled the electors and princes whose aid he sought. He had 12 pages, 15 secretaries, and 50 lackeys; in the culinary department there were over 100 servants, for Belle Isle believed he could make converts to his cause by furnishing them unlimited good eating and good drinking. When he reached Frankfort there were covers

[1] *MSS. Mém. de Belle Isle*, i. 56.

[2] *Ib.*, i. 138; conversation between Frederick and Belle Isle.

laid each day at his table for 80 or 100 guests, and rarely were there any vacant places.[1]

Such magnificence was not without effect on the three hundred sovereigns who made up the German empire, many of whom ruled over territories not ten leagues square, and whose revenues for a year were not as much as Belle Isle spent in a month. They admired the greatness and wealth of a power whose representative could indulge in a display far beyond the means of many hereditary rulers. But if France was admired and feared in Germany, she was not loved. For a century she had exerted a great influence beyond the Rhine, and so sagacious had been the policy of Richelieu and Mazarin, that during their administration the German allies were for the most part in hearty sympathy with the great power which extended to them her protection. Under Louis XIV. this was no longer true. Partly by his religious bigotry, still more by his overbearing conduct, and by the outrages which he allowed his soldiers to commit, Louis alienated the friends of France. The princelets, who tried to imitate the splendors of Versailles, bore no love for its master. This feeling of sullen jealousy and irritation continued during the reign of Louis XV. "What hurts the Elector of Bavaria in the mind of all Germany," said Frederick to the French ambassador, "is his dependence on you." The lesser German princes resembled the king of Prussia alike in their adoption of French customs and their dislike of French procedure. They spoke the French language, they read French books, they wore French clothes, and they hated the French people.

Notwithstanding this, Belle Isle's diplomatic mis-

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, iii. 308, 436; Belle Isle, iii. 250.

sion was attended with success. Three of the electoral votes belonged to the archbishops of Cologne, Mentz, and Treves. These dignitaries were usually younger sons of great German families, who devoted their attention to the pleasures of the world, and to avoiding the hostility of more powerful neighbors. If they were not fond of France, they were much afraid of her, and the fortunes of Maria Theresa seemed to them involved in danger and uncertainty. Belle Isle in turn cajoled and threatened these timid princes. "You have sent Belle Isle here to scold me like a child," complained the Elector of Cologne, but he deemed it wise to follow the marshal's counsels. Practical arguments were also used to influence the decision of the electors. They were generally needy and corrupt, and so were their advisers, and Belle Isle purchased all who were worth buying. In these little courts some subordinate official often held the confidence of the master, and was not to be overlooked in the distribution of bribes. At Treves, in addition to money for the chancellor, Belle Isle promised a good abbey to the suffragan, and some moderate sums to the confessor and to the valet de chambre, the services of these two officials being estimated as of about equal value. "There will be a little to give the confessor," wrote the marshal, "that he may impress upon the elector's conscience the evils of the war that will be inevitable if the grand duke is chosen emperor."[1] Belle Isle was advised not to offer any stated sum of money to the chancellor, such was the delicacy of that official's feelings, so he promised him the protection of the French king in general terms, and left the details to be arranged afterwards.[2]

[1] *MSS. Mém. de Belle Isle*, i. 64–67. [2] *Ib.*

With the Elector of Mentz the procedure was more simple. The elector was under the control of his nephew, and to the nephew Belle Isle offered to deposit a million in bank as soon as his uncle should sign a written promise to vote for the candidate of France, the money to be paid over when the vote was given, for the episcopal agreement was not regarded as sufficient to justify payment before it was carried into effect. No modern election agent, buying votes at the polls, proceeds with more care than did the French ambassador, and there was as much need of caution with archbishops who were bought for a million, as there is with the riffraff who are purchased for a dollar; the bribes were larger, and good faith was correspondingly weaker. The nephew demanded of Belle Isle absolute secrecy as to this bargain. "I assured him," writes the marshal, "that I would be more secret than the Austrian representative as to the hundred thousand florins which he had given." The nephew protested against this calumny, but apparently only as to the amount received. "The grand duke was not as liberal as that," he said.[1]

The fortunes of war produced a more disastrous effect on the grand duke's candidacy than French money or Belle Isle's arguments. The Austrians at last gathered an army in Silesia, and on April 10, 1741, the battle of Mollwitz was fought. The Prussians were successful, although Frederick himself abandoned the field as lost and fled to Oppeln, thirty-five miles away. The news of his success reached him in a mill

[1] *Mém. de Belle Isle*, i. 92, 3. These memoirs are merely transcripts of the letters written by Belle Isle at the time, and now at the *Affaires Etrangères*. The former Duke of Lorraine was then Grand Duke of Tuscany.

near Löwen, in which he had sought shelter; he emerged, declared the wits, covered with flour and glory.[1] The result of the battle showed that vigorous drill and discipline had made the Prussian soldiers the best in Europe. They were as firm as rocks and as brave as lions, said one of their commanders, and the credit of this first great victory of the Prussian arms should be given to Frederick William. However eccentric his character, he had known how to create an army, and his son soon proved his ability to command it.

The king had delayed making any alliance with France in the hope that the English could persuade Maria Theresa to cede him lower Silesia, but the queen of Hungary was obstinate, and the French were pliant, and on June 5, 1741, a treaty between France and Prussia was signed. The advantage was all on Frederick's side. Louis agreed to send an army to Germany; he guaranteed to Prussia the possession of lower Silesia and Breslau, and all that he got in return was Frederick's promise to vote for the Elector of Bavaria as emperor.

This alliance, however, rendered the choice of the elector almost certain; usually the candidate of Austria had received every electoral vote, now it seemed doubtful if he could obtain one. The three archbishops, Frederick, as Elector of Brandenburg, and the Elector of Saxony were already practically assured to

[1] Frederick was advised to leave the field in order to escape danger. The rapidity of his flight shows that he thought the battle was lost. Of most of his acts he speaks in his memoirs with entire frankness, but he makes no reference to this flight. It was Schwerin who advised Frederick to leave the field, and he declared afterwards that the king never forgave him. For the battle of Mollwitz see Grünhagen, *Geschichte des ersten Schlesischen Kriegs*, 170–196.

the French candidate; a successful campaign might gain him the support of the other electors. Belle Isle wrote exultingly to Fleury, "You will have the glory of having abased forever the rival and enemy of France."[1] But the old minister was not deceived; he saw how little France could really gain from the policy which he allowed to be pursued; above all, almost alone among his associates, he put no faith in Frederick. The king did not spare fair words. "I promise you, you shall have no complaints on your side," he wrote, "and no reason to repent of your alliance. If I have asked time to decide, this delay will only serve to render my fidelity more inviolable."[2] But Fleury wrote to Belle Isle, "The king of Prussia disturbs me more than any one else. Good faith and sincerity are not his favorite virtues; he is false in everything, even in his compliments. I doubt if he will be faithful in his alliances, for he has no principle but his own interest."[3] The correctness of Fleury's judgment was soon shown; in less than eight months from the time Frederick signed the treaty with France, he had made a secret bargain with Austria and left his allies to carry on the contest as best they could.

It is now time to follow the career of the Elector of Bavaria, in whose behalf France had taken up arms. We shall find in him the exact reverse of Frederick's qualities, — perfect good faith and an entire lack of ability. Charles Albert succeeded to his father as Elector of Bavaria in 1726, and was now a man forty-three years of age. He was amiable in charac-

[1] Belle Isle to Fleury, June 6, 1741.

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, i. 251, 252, Frederick to Fleury and Belle Isle, May 30, 1741.

[3] Fleury to Belle Isle, June 17, 1741.

ter, infirm in purpose, with a weakness for pomp and a taste for titles; he might have passed his life in happy insignificance in his electorate, but unwise ambition brought him to an early grave with a broken heart. He had married a daughter of the Emperor Joseph, an older brother of Charles VI.; on her marriage the electress renounced her claim on the Austrian succession, and this renunciation her husband never sought to evade. But the elector was himself a descendant of the daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand I., and the rights thus inherited he declared no Pragmatic Sanction could take away. His pretensions do not seem to have been well founded. The possessions of the House of Austria had been transmitted in the male line for almost two centuries since the death of Ferdinand, and when a male heir at last failed, the rights of the daughter of Charles VI. were better founded than those which were derived from a daughter of Ferdinand. But with the pretensions of Charles Albert, as with those of Frederick II., it was not a question of right but of might. The elector had repudiated the Pragmatic Sanction in the lifetime of the emperor; he now hoped to enforce his claims on the hereditary possessions of Charles VI., and, to gratify an ambition still dearer to his vanity, to wear the crown of Charlemagne and of the Holy Roman Empire. When the news of the emperor's death reached Munich, the elector felt that for him the hour of fate had sounded, and assurances of French support gave an air of reality to what had seemed only ambitious dreams. The alliance between France and Prussia soon followed, and in August, 1741, the French crossed the Rhine. A French army was rarely welcome on German soil; but Fleury endeavored to

arouse as little ill will as possible. Perfect discipline was maintained; supplies were promptly paid for, a thing so rare that it excited surprise as well as pleasure;[1] war was not declared against Austria; the troops, Fleury said, came only to protect their ally, the Elector of Bavaria, against his enemies. The elector had already invaded Austria at the head of about twenty thousand Bavarians. He met with little resistance; the Austrians had no army in the field, and the people were not averse to Charles Albert as a ruler; Maria Theresa had as yet done nothing to excite the enthusiasm of her subjects, her husband's manners were chilly, his capacity was small, and he was not popular.[2] In September the French joined the elector, and the united forces, consisting of about sixty thousand men, were put under his command.

They could not have had a more indifferent leader. Charles Albert had no talent for war: he was timid, slow, and irresolute. "During two months," wrote Belle Isle, "the elector was never of the same mind for two days in succession."[3] The marshal was himself the nominal commander of the French armies in Germany, but, with mistaken judgment, he thought it wise to watch the intrigues of the electoral college in person and to command the army by correspondence. There was delay in obtaining his orders, and between the presence of the elector and the absence of Belle Isle, the conduct of the campaign was irresolute and inefficient.

At first, however, all went well. The elector summoned the citizens of Linz, the capital of Upper

[1] Maurice de Saxe to Belle Isle, August 23, 1741.

[2] *Tagebuch*, 19 *et pas.*; *Letters of Vincent*; *Cor. de Vienne.*

[3] Belle Isle to Breteuil, October 21, 1741.

Austria, to receive him as their lawful sovereign. No opposition was offered; he entered the city in triumph; in a few days the whole province was overrun, and the allied armies were within three days' march of Vienna. That capital was almost defenseless, and it was expected that the enemy would at once advance upon it; many fled from the city, while others prepared for a siege as best they could, but against an army of sixty thousand men no long resistance was possible. Frederick wrote the elector urging him to attack his enemies while they were weak, and to march directly on Vienna. "March to the capital," he said; "you cut the root of the Austrian tree, and its fall must follow."[1] It seemed as if the prophets were right, that the overthrow of the House of Austria would soon be accomplished, and its capital in the hands of a French army. But the courage of Maria Theresa and the inefficiency of Charles Albert saved Austria from ruin. The elector was afraid to advance to Vienna; he was haunted by imaginary fears that the Austrians would invade Bavaria, and he preferred undertaking the conquest of Bohemia, of which he claimed to be the lawful sovereign.[2] Meanwhile he amused himself with numerous pageants, and in receiving the allegiance of his new subjects; after wasting

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, i. 266; Frederick to elector, June 30, 1741. Voltaire made the charge that the failure to advance on Vienna was due to Fleury, and this calumny has been often repeated. The accusation is utterly without foundation, as has been shown conclusively by the Duc de Broglie. Belle Isle as well as the elector disapproved of the plan. "I have always opposed the king's desire for an advance on Vienna," Belle Isle writes the elector, October 23, 1741.

[2] *Tagebuch Karl's VII.*, 23; Belle Isle to Amelot, August 25, October 4, 1741.

most of September, the allied armies began their march to Bohemia, and the moment of greatest peril for Maria Theresa was past.

In the mean time, she had been occupied with exciting the enthusiasm of her own subjects and in seeking to divide her enemies, and in both she was successful. In June, 1741, she was solemnly crowned at Presburg as queen of Hungary, and she appealed to the patriotism and to the courage of the warlike people of that country; inspired by the heroism of their young ruler, they promised to send to the field every man able to bear arms.

The queen of Hungary was well fitted to arouse the enthusiasm of an heroic people, for she could appeal to feelings which she herself shared; but it was a difficult and a painful task for her to sue for peace from those who had plotted her ruin. When Frederick first invaded Silesia the English advised the queen to sacrifice her resentment, and obtain peace on the terms he demanded; she then replied that she would discuss no terms while a Prussian soldier remained on Silesian soil;[1] but now Vienna was in danger of capture, Bavaria and Saxony had agreed upon a division of her dominions, which left her little more than the kingdom of Hungary, and it seemed not impossible that this alone would remain to her of the great possessions of the House of Hapsburg. If she must propitiate any of her enemies, Maria Theresa preferred to deal with France. Frederick had begun the attack, and the loss of Silesia exposed her other territories to invasion. She regarded her neighbor as an infidel, a

[1] This was said by the grand duke to the Prussian envoy, letter of Robinson, December 21, 1740, published by Raumer, but Maria Teresa inspired the answer.

liar, and a robber, and was unwilling to cede to him a foot of land. Overtures, however, were made both to France and to Prussia. The queen offered to cede Luxembourg to the French, the Low Countries to the Elector of Bavaria, and possessions in Italy to Spain, if she could obtain peace.[1] If the French had been willing to leave their ally in the lurch, they could have made peace with Austria, and obtained a valuable acquisition of territory. But they refused even to discuss terms except in connection with Frederick. "We are not free," Fleury wrote; "we can enter into no negotiations except with our allies."

The envoys for peace met with a very different reception from Frederick. Various endeavors had already been made to detach him from the alliance, but the terms offered were not such as he desired; he was resolved to have lower Silesia and Breslau, and would abate nothing in his demands. So long as the offers were unsatisfactory, Frederick declared with vehemence that he would not desert his allies.[2] "Tell Valori," he wrote Podewils in August, "that nothing in the world can draw me from my alliance with France."[3]

"My engagements are so solemn, so indissoluble, and so inviolable," he told the English negotiator, "that I will not desert these faithful allies."[4] "It would be infamous for me to enter into negotiations with Aus-

[1] *Instruktion für Koch*, September 1, 1741, cited by Arneth, *Cor. de Vienne*, September, 1741, *Aff. Etr.*

[2] See terms offered by Robinson, August 7, 1741, *Pol. Cor.*, i. 297, and Frederick's response.

[3] *Pol. Cor.*, i. 321. "Nichts in der Welt fähig mich von meiner Allianz mit Frankreich abzuführen."

[4] *Pol. Cor.*, i. 333, 334, Frederick to Hyndford, September 14, 1741, camp before Neisse.

tria and England." [1] This was on September 14. A few days later, Maria Theresa at last decided that she must accede to Frederick's demands, cede lower Silesia, and demand only neutrality in return, and she authorized the British envoy to make that offer. It was accepted at once. The "faithful allies" were neither considered nor consulted when an acceptable proposition was made. By the last of September terms had been agreed upon; a cartel was signed in October, providing that lower Silesia and Neisse should be ceded to Prussia when peace was made; in return for this, Frederick agreed that he would preserve a strict neutrality, and that the Austrian army in Silesia might retire undisturbed, and hasten to the defense of Bohemia.[2] Frederick was then besieging Neisse, and to deceive his allies it was agreed that a mock siege should be continued for fifteen days, at the end of which time the town was to surrender. He demanded also that his troops should go into winter quarters in upper Silesia. This remained Austrian territory, and the English envoy protested in amazement against a procedure which could only be justified if the parties continued at war. "I have the honor to inform you," Frederick's minister wrote, "that we desire very much to cease carrying on war, but we do not wish to appear to have ceased carrying it on." [3] The demand was acceded to, and it was agreed that the armistice should be kept secret.

Having secured what he desired for himself, Frederick showed that he was free from any prejudice in

[1] Frederick to Hyndford.

[2] See mem. to Hyndford, September 28; *Pol. Cor.*, i. 356, September 30, 359; Protokol, October 9, 371, 372.

[3] To Hyndford, September 30, *Pol. Cor.*, 359.

favor of his nominal allies, or against his nominal enemies. Marshal Neipperg, the Austrian commander, paid a visit to the king. Frederick gave him judicious advice as to the campaign against his French and Bavarian allies, and assured him that if the armies of the queen of Hungary were fortunate, he might soon be found on her side.[1]

It was impossible that the existence of such an armistice should not be suspected, but Frederick spared no pains to convince his allies that he continued faithful. On the day that he advised with Neipperg as to the best way to beat the Bavarians and French, he wrote Belle Isle praising the zeal with which France was assisting Bavaria. "It is reserved to Louis XV. to be the arbiter of kings, and to M. de Belle Isle to be the instrument of his power and wisdom," he added.[2] The claws were hardly concealed in Frederick's caresses, and his compliments were most extravagant when he was acting in bad faith.

He continued to keep the allies fully advised as to the progress of the mock siege of Neisse. He informed the elector and Belle Isle that he found the siege more difficult than he expected.[3] "I have so alarmed Neipperg," he wrote Fleury, "that he is marching night and day to gain the gorges of Jägerndorf. . . . I could not pursue him for lack of provisions."[4] At last he was able to report the capture of the city. "The bombs have done a terrible amount

[1] Dispatch of Hyndford, October 14, 1741, published in Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 149, 150.

[2] Frederick to Belle Isle, October 9, 1741.

[3] *Pol. Cor.*, i. 377, 383.

[4] *Ib.*, 392, Frederick to Fleury, October 29, 1741.

of damage," he informed the Elector of Bavaria, and in the same letter he added, "I can assure you on my honor that I have made no peace with the Austrians, and I will not until you are satisfied."[1] "We must render justice to the king of Prussia," wrote the simple-minded elector; "no one could act with more frankness and good faith."[2] On the 1st of November, three weeks after the convention of Kleinschnellendorf, Frederick signed a further treaty with his nominal allies, in which they agreed on the distribution to be made of a large portion of the inheritance of Maria Theresa.

While Frederick was occupied in making his own peace, and in lying with a vigor that was unusual even for him, the elector had marched into Bohemia, and by November his forces, now strengthened by a Saxon contingent, were before the walls of Prague. But the allies could no longer occupy the possessions of Maria Theresa without meeting serious opposition; the Hungarians were hastening to her rescue, and the army under Neipperg, released from Silesia by the armistice with Frederick, was free to oppose the further advance of the elector. It seemed probable that the invaders would be obliged to retreat from Prague, but the city was captured by a daring assault led by Maurice de Saxe, who now began to show himself one of the great generals of the age. Maurice conceived the idea of scaling the walls with a small body of men, while the attention of the garrison was diverted by false attacks. The plan was proposed before a council of war, which at first decided that it was ab-

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, 398, Frederick to elector, November 2, 1741.

[2] Elector to Belle Isle, October 9, 1741, *Cor. de Bav.*

surd and impossible.[1] But the forces of the queen of Hungary were hastening to the rescue of the city, and it was finally resolved to allow Maurice to make his experiment. At a little after twelve, in the darkness of a November night, ladders were placed against the walls at an unguarded spot, and up them the soldiers scrambled. The ladders were so short that they had to be tied together to reach the top, and some of them broke under the weight of the men. But a small body of soldiers succeeded in scaling the wall, overpowered the guards, threw open the gate, and let down the drawbridge; Maurice entered in triumph, and made himself master of the city before the garrison knew what had happened.[2] "You desired Prague should be taken," he wrote Belle Isle, in French as incorrect as it was spirited; "it is taken, the governor has surrendered to me, and I write from his chamber."[3]

Though the city was taken by assault, there was no disorder and no plundering. According to a popular tradition, some ladies returning from a ball were met

[1] The elector in his *Tagebuch*, 30, 2, 3, claims to have devised this scheme himself, and Maurice figures very little in his account. Instead of wasting praise on Maurice he writes, "We cannot doubt that the Holy Virgin fortified me in this design and assisted me in the execution," p. 33. In a letter to Maurice of April 24, 1742, he says, however, "I already owe you the capture of Prague."

[2] An account of the capture of Prague is given in a letter written by Maurice and published by Taillendier. The official accounts are in the archives. A letter of the Duke of Chevreuse, who took part in the assault, is found in *Mém. de Luynes*, iv.

[3] Maurice de Saxe to Belle Isle, November 26, 1741. In an age of bad spelling, Maurice, of all writers whose letters have been preserved, spelled the worst.

by French officers and politely escorted to their homes; many of the citizens only discovered in the morning that the town had been captured. Military license was so common at this period that the fact that no rioting or pillage followed the capture of the city, that houses were not burned, women were not violated, and citizens were not murdered, excited almost as much surprise in Europe as the manner in which it had been taken. On the following day the elector entered the city and proceeded at once to the cathedral, where the Te Deum was sung; the booming of distant cannon mingled with the voices of the choristers as they rendered thanks for the victory.[1]

The loss of this important town was a severe blow to the Austrian cause. The elector at once assumed to act as the lawful sovereign of Bohemia; on the 19th of December the states met at Prague and recognized Charles Albert as their king. The states were largely attended, and his new subjects took the oath of allegiance with apparent zeal. Many, indeed, remained constant to the cause of Maria Theresa, but the majority of the Bohemians had no deep affection for the House of Austria, and cared little whether the queen of Hungary or the Elector of Bavaria was to be their ruler.[2]

Other results of the capture of Prague were equally unfortunate for Maria Theresa. Frederick had told Marshal Neipperg that if good fortune attended the arms of his mistress he might soon be found on her side. She had met with calamity instead of victory, and the king now decided that it would be for his interest again to throw in his lot with her enemies.

[1] *Tagebuch Karl's VII.*

[2] *Ib.*, 36; Arneth, i. 344.

Lord Hyndford had negotiated the armistice in October, and in December he visited Frederick in order to carry out the prior agreement and convert the armistice into a permanent treaty. He soon found that the king had no thought of abiding by the bargain of October. "I will speak frankly with you," said Frederick; "the Austrians have let Prague be taken under their noses, without risking a battle. If they had been fortunate, I don't know what I should have done. Now we have one hundred and thirty thousand men to their seventy thousand; they may make peace as best they can." [1]

For this breach of his agreement the Prussian king alleged that he had a justification: he had insisted that the armistice of October should be kept secret; this had not been done, and hence he was no longer bound. It was impossible that it would remain secret; the peaceful retreat of Neipperg had convinced all Europe that some arrangement had been made between Frederick and Maria Theresa; when the existence of the armistice was known to innumerable diplomats and officers, both Austrian and English, some of them were sure to make it public. The Austrian historians charged Frederick with consenting to the protocol in order to obtain a respite for his soldiers, and imposing an impossible condition of secrecy as a pretext for its violation when he should again be ready for hostilities. This accusation is probably unjust. Frederick agreed to the armistice, not with any fixed purpose of violating it, but with the intention of keeping it or not as his interests should require. After the capture of Prague he decided that it would

[1] Report of Hyndford, published by Raumer, *Beiträge zur neueren Geschichte*, ii. 153–155.

not be to his advantage to make peace at present. "Trickery, bad faith, and duplicity are unfortunately the characteristics of most men who are now at the head of nations," Frederick wrote sadly to Voltaire, after he had a second time taken up arms against Maria Theresa.[1]

[1] Frederick to Voltaire, February 3, 1742.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EMPEROR CHARLES VII.

As a result of the capture of Prague the Elector of Bavaria was declared king of Bohemia, and this victory secured him a crown which he coveted still more. Several months had passed since the members of the electoral college began to assemble at Frankfort for the election of a new emperor, but the body proceeded with the deliberation which befitted its dignity, and questions of etiquette and procedure were discussed at infinite length. The electors had one matter of real importance to consider, and that was the vote of Bohemia. The king of Bohemia was entitled to one of the nine electoral votes; but this privilege, it was held, could not be exercised by a woman, and Maria Theresa sought to transfer her right to her husband. Not only was the legality of this questioned, but the Elector of Bavaria claimed that he was now the lawful ruler of that country, and he had justified his title by capturing the capital of the kingdom; in such a complication as this the electors resolved that the vote of Bohemia must be regarded as in abeyance, and could not be received at all.

Months passed away, and Belle Isle tried in vain to hasten an election, which he felt sure would result in favor of the candidate of France. It was November before the college formally convened, and even then its members were in no haste to reach a decision. In truth, the choice of an emperor was not to be

decided at the conferences of the electors, but on the field of battle; as Frederick had said, the imperial crown would go to the strongest. The capture of Prague settled the question; even the stanchest friends of Maria Theresa were convinced that her cause was lost; the House of Austria, said one of the most sagacious of German princes, had been stricken by the hand of God, and was doomed to ruin.[1] There was no pretext for further delay; the 24th of January, 1742, was fixed as the date of the election, and there could now be no doubt of its result.

But the situation might change, and the friends of Bavaria were earnest that there should be no postponement. It was in vain that the partisans of Maria Theresa declared that a few months would alter the position of affairs, and that any proceedings taken now would be plainly invalid, alike because the vote of Bohemia was illegally excluded, and because there could be no free and fair election while foreign armies were in the heart of the empire; the influence of France was predominant, and such protests were disregarded.

The danger of delay was not entirely averted, for only a few days before the time fixed for the election, a fierce controversy arose over the manner in which the electors' chairs should be placed in the church, and the order in which those dignitaries should march at the coronation.[2] So bitter was the dispute that it bade fair to cause a postponement, but by dint of unceasing effort Belle Isle soothed the susceptibilities of these punctilious sovereigns, and it was at last certain that on the 24th an emperor would be chosen.

[1] Conversation with the Bishop of Würzburg given by Belle Isle, *MSS. Mém.*, iii. 215.

[2] *Ib.*, iii. 232.

If the action of the electoral college was really under constraint, the forms were carefully observed which the law declared necessary for a free choice. French armies were within the confines of the empire; three of the electors were waging war against one of the candidates, but no physical violence threatened the members of the college as they met to deliberate in the chamber of the Römer, or to cast their votes in the chapel of St. Bartholomew. On January 23, trumpeters warned all strangers to leave the city, that the election on the following day might be free from foreign influence. Belle Isle and the other ambassadors accordingly retired beyond the walls; the gates were locked; the Jews were confined in their quarter; the officials took a solemn oath to preserve order.

On the following day the eight electors, or their representatives, met in the church of St. Bartholomew to cast their votes for Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The election was unanimous. Brandenburg, Saxony, and Bavaria were united in arms against Austria; the three ecclesiastical electors and the Palatine had joined the stronger party; even George II. of England had agreed to desert the interests of Maria Theresa, in order to save Hanover from invasion by the French. At noon, amid the firing of cannon and the ringing of bells, heralds appeared on the walls of the city and proclaimed to the world without that Charles, Duke of Bavaria, had been duly chosen king of the Romans. As the electors came from the church, the grand marshal of the empire was at once dispatched to notify Charles of the result; he rode in hot haste, accompanied by twenty-four postilions; just before midnight he reached the

elector and greeted him with his new title as king of the Romans.[1]

Charles kept a diary, in which he recorded his joys, his griefs, and his vanities with the frankness of Pepys, and by the aid of this we can follow the career of this weak, honorable, and most unfortunate prince. The announcement of his elevation filled the vainglorious elector with joy; a week later he made his entry into Frankfort with a magnificence which he tells us had never been equaled.[2]

Charles had a strong taste for display, which unfortunately did not correspond with the low condition of his finances, and the French envoy tried in vain to prevent him from squandering all his ready money on the pageantry of his coronation.

On the 12th of February, 1742, he was crowned with all the splendor which he could desire. "The preparations for the great ceremony," he writes, "were more than magnificent; one saw in them the grandeur of a Roman emperor."[3] Sixty princes of the empire assisted at the ceremony, and the most illustrious nobles paid their homage. Mounted on his horse, Charles proceeded through the streets of Frankfort; the ensigns of the empire were carried before him, accompanied by the officials of the city; the electors followed on horseback, gorgeous in their scarlet mantles trimmed with ermine, with cloaks that seemed made of gold, and hats of an antique fashion surmounted by plumes of extraordinary size; it seemed as if the splendor of the Middle Ages had returned to earth; the long procession of nobles and officials, clad

[1] For this see letters of Belle Isle to Amelot.

[2] *Tagebuch Karl's VII.*, 49.

[3] *Ib.*, 51.

in all the gorgeousness of the past, continued until the eye was wearied with a surfeit of color.

When they reached the cathedral, Charles was met at the door by the ecclesiastical electors; he was clothed in the imperial dress, which, he tells us with satisfaction, fitted him as if it had been made for him.[1] His brother, the Elector of Cologne, placed the crown on his head, and he was seated upon the throne amid the acclamations of a great multitude crying, "Long live Charles the Seventh."[2] "The eyes of all the world were turned upon me," writes Charles. "I had to sustain the greatness of the dignity with which I was invested, and also the length of the ceremony and the pains of gravel from which I was suffering. It was in these moments of grandeur that I perceived I was only a frail man. Seeing myself thus at the supreme degree of human greatness, I could but reflect on the might of God, who does not wish that we should forget we are his creatures, even when He elevates us to the greatest height."

There was indeed much to remind the new emperor that he was human and subject to the misfortunes of humanity; he was suffering from disease, and the calamities in store for him were already beginning. But for a few hours such melancholy reflections were banished. In the evening the city was illuminated,

[1] Goethe says a new dress, of the model of that worn by Charlemagne, was made for each emperor. Charles seems to have regarded his as the one actually worn by his great predecessor.

[2] Correspondance de Diet, *Aff. Etr.*, Letters of Belle Isle to Amelot; *Tagebuch Karl's VII.*, 48–57; *Mém. de Sophie de Prusse*, ii. 33 *et seq.* The best description of the ceremonies at the election and consecration of an emperor is given by Goethe in his *Wahrheit und Dichtung.*

and the various dignitaries vied with one another in the magnificence of the festivities with which they celebrated the great event. Belle Isle had for weeks kept open house and entertained on a lavish scale. Such hospitality was expensive, he wrote the secretary for foreign affairs, but exceedingly beneficial in its results.[1] On the day of the coronation he gave a supper at which two hundred were entertained, almost all princes or princesses, for in Germany the supply of such dignitaries was unlimited. This was followed by a masked ball, at which the son and the daughters of the emperor danced until three, while Charles was in despair that an attack of gout kept him away.[2] At the marriage of his brother a few days before, this resolute pleasure-seeker had been pushed in a rolling chair by two chamberlains, and had thus followed the figures of a polonaise danced by torchlight, but he could not repeat such efforts indefinitely.

Charles was wise to derive the utmost enjoyment possible from his new splendor while he could, for his election marked the close of his prosperity. It soon appeared how empty was the dignity to which he had been chosen, but the illusion that hung about his office deceived men of more political sagacity than himself. The choice of the Elector of Bavaria as emperor had been the object of French policy since the death of Charles VI.; Belle Isle had remained at Frankfort instead of joining the army, because the intrigues of the electors were thought as important as victories in the field; he now wrote Louis that the result of the election secured the repose of his king-

[1] Belle Isle to Amelot, January 25, 1742.

[2] *Ib.*, February 12, 15, 1742.

dom and covered his reign with glory. "You have accomplished the most important work of centuries," he wrote to Fleury, "in destroying the House of Austria, and obtaining the crown of emperor for a friend of France."[1] The ambassador knew that the cardinal cared as much for thrift as for glory, and he hastened to assure him that no emperor had ever secured his election with a smaller expenditure of money.[2] The belief was almost universal, even among those who at heart were friendly to Maria Theresa, that her cause had received a serious blow from the result of the election, and that her antagonist would gain in prestige and strength from his new dignity.[3]

The course of events proved how fallacious was such reasoning. Charles VII. could not command an additional soldier nor a florin more on the day after he had been consecrated emperor; the electors who had chosen him for their nominal chief had no thought of risking their fortunes in his behalf. For centuries the electoral princes had sought to secure their own independence and to prevent the growth of a central and controlling power, and as the result of such a policy the emperor had become little more than a gorgeous pageant; the empire helped to disintegrate rather than to unify Germany.

The day of Charles's election witnessed the first important success of the arms of Maria Theresa. Since her people had rallied to her support, the armies of the queen had been strengthened until she could contend with her enemies almost on equal terms, and she resolved upon an effort to rescue

[1] Belle Isle to Fleury, January 24, 1742.
[2] *Ib.* to Amelot, January 25, 1742.
[3] *Ib.*, *Mém.*, iii. 253, 7 *et pas.*

Upper Austria. Sixteen thousand men, under the command of Marshal Khevenhüller, advanced upon Linz, the capital of the province, which was garrisoned by French and Bavarian soldiers commanded by Count Ségur. Maria Theresa was inferior in intellect to her great rival Frederick, but she had the qualities which excite strong enthusiasm, and they rendered her no unequal foe. The whole energy of her nature was bent upon the capture of Linz. Victory there would deliver Austria from the presence of hostile armies; it would lay Bavaria open to invasion; it would be a turning-point in her fortunes. She sent a letter to Khevenhüller with a picture of herself and of her son. "Here you see," she wrote, "a queen and her son who have been deserted by all the world. What shall be this child's fate? Its mother confides to you, as a faithful minister, her strength and her power. Act then, O hero and true vassal, as you must answer before God and the world, and you will deserve from me and my successors favor and gratitude and grace, and from the world fame. Fight well and farewell!"[1] The letter was received while the officers were at their mess. Khevenhüller rose and read it aloud before those present. There were tears in every eye; the voice of the field marshal was choked by his emotions; the officers rose from their seats and swore that their lives and their property they would sacrifice in the defense of Maria Theresa. Her portrait was exhibited to the soldiers; they drew the swords from their scabbards, kissed the edges, and blew kisses to the picture of the queen.

While the assailants were animated by such enthusiasm, the defenders of the town were dispirited and

[1] Letter of Maria Theresa, published by Arneth, ii. 9.

discouraged. There seemed no prospect of receiving reinforcements; Marshal Broglie was in command of the army at Prague; he needed his forces for his own protection, and could furnish none for the relief of Linz; the Bavarian troops, under the inefficient command of Torring, were unable to be of any aid. After a brief bombardment, Ségur offered to surrender if he could obtain honorable terms; if those were not granted, he declared that he would remain in Linz until there was nothing left of the city but ruins.[1] It was a threat easy to accomplish; the city was largely built of wood, already considerable portions had been destroyed by fire, and the citizens were in despair at the prospect of a long siege. The Austrian commander was loath to witness the destruction of the capital of Upper Austria and the suffering this would bring to subjects of the queen; he consented that the troops under Ségur's command might evacuate Linz with the honors of war, upon their agreement not to serve for a year against Maria Theresa. On January 24, the day the electoral college chose the Elector of Bavaria as emperor, eight thousand French and Bavarians marched out of Linz, and that city returned to its former allegiance. Upper Austria was lost to the new emperor as rapidly as it had been won. Had the electors known of the fate of Linz, they would have hesitated before casting their votes for an enemy of Austria; but in those days news traveled slowly, and Charles VII. had been chosen before the change in his fortunes could be announced; his lot would have been a happier one if the intelligence had reached Frankfort in time to prevent his election.

[1] Ségur to Belle Isle, January 30, 1742.

The capture of Linz excited great exultation at Vienna; but one person was dissatisfied, and that person was the queen. Her feelings were more bitter than those of her generals; it grieved her that any terms had been granted the French; her indignation against the invaders of her domains would only have been appeased if she could have seen them marching before her as prisoners of war, expiating in captivity and disgrace the wickedness of their conduct.[1]

If the terms of the capitulation were unsatisfactory to the queen, the results were all that she could desire. Not only was Upper Austria restored, but Bavaria was open to invasion. The subjects of the Elector of Bavaria had regarded with apprehension the warlike plans of their ruler. They had already experienced the evils which flowed from the unquiet ambition of the House of Bavaria, and from its jealousy of Austrian supremacy. In the war of the Spanish Succession the Elector of Bavaria was the ally of Louis XIV.; he had been chased from his dominions; for ten years Bavaria had been held by Austrian troops and been subjected to all the misery that results from occupation by hostile armies. Since then it had enjoyed the blessings of peace under the mild rule of its dukes, until Charles, allured by the hope of wresting the imperial crown from the House of Austria, and stimulated by the offer of French assistance, followed his father's example and involved his country in the vicissitudes of war. The peace-loving inhabitants of Bavaria had no desire that their ruler should also be emperor and king of Bohemia, and they justly feared that Charles's unwise ambition

[1] Arneth, ii. 11.

would bring upon the land all the misfortunes which it had suffered under his father. These gloomy apprehensions were now realized; the Austrians occupied the whole of Bavaria, practically without opposition; the scanty resources of the elector had been lavished on a wasteful magnificence; his troops were ill paid, ill disciplined, and ill officered, and thus could offer no effective resistance.[1] On the day that Charles was crowned emperor the Austrians entered Munich, his family were obliged to fly, all of Bavaria fell under the control of the enemy, and it was treated as a conquered province.

In the mean time, while the allies were fresh from their triumph at Prague, and before this series of calamities had begun, Frederick had broken his truce with Maria Theresa, and he led into Moravia an army chiefly composed of Saxons and French. His plans seem to have been ill advised, and no important results followed.

The king soon returned to Berlin, discontented with his allies, alarmed at the success of Maria Theresa in Bavaria, and very ill at ease that he had again involved himself in a war where there was now little hope of additional gains, and in which he had won no additional laurels.

It was more than a year since Frederick's invasion of Silesia had kindled the war for the dismemberment of the Austrian empire; though the moment of greatest peril for Maria Theresa had passed, yet the result of the war was still uncertain. France, Prussia, Saxony, and Bavaria were allied; they had agreed that, of the possessions of Maria Theresa, Silesia should be taken by Prussia, Bohemia and Upper Austria by

[1] *MSS. Mém. de Belle Isle,* iv. 345.

Bavaria, and Moravia by Saxony,[1] and they were still in possession of large parts of the disputed territory; if they continued the war with vigor, Austria might cease to be one of the great powers of Europe. It was Frederick who had involved Maria Theresa in a contest that threatened her ruin; it was Frederick's desertion of his allies that insured her final victory.

The king of Prussia was greatly annoyed at the result of his expedition into Moravia, where he had gained neither glory nor advantage; his allies, with good cause, distrusted him, and he, with equally good cause, complained of the blunders and the incapacity of their generals. He manifested his discontent by an unusual display of ill nature: he was irritable and despondent. "The expression of his face," wrote the French ambassador, "was that of a lost soul."[2] Apprehensive of the future and displeased with his associates, Frederick resolved to make peace and secure his gains. "I need peace at once," he wrote Podewils; "no general peace will be as advantageous to me as to make a separate treaty."[3] It had been agreed that the allies should act together in any negotiations, and Frederick knew full well that his desertion would leave his associates in grievous plight; no one judged the political and military situation with more unerring accuracy. The probable results of his secession furnished him a strong argument in obtaining what he wanted for himself. If Maria Theresa would cede Silesia to him, he told the English envoy, she could save Bohemia, Moravia, and

[1] Such were substantially the terms of the treaty signed in November, 1741.

[2] Valori to Amelot, April 25, 1742.

[3] *Pol. Cor.*, ii. 98, 119.

Upper Austria for herself.[1] These were the provinces which, by a treaty signed in November, he had agreed to secure for Saxony and Bavaria, but this consideration did not affect him. He hated the Saxons, and regarded the emperor as an imbecile. To any charge of bad faith he had the answer which he has made in his memoirs, — "Is it better that a nation should perish, or that a prince should break his promise?"[2]

In a paper intended for his own use, Frederick balanced the reasons for and against making a separate peace. In the memoirs which he prepared for posterity, he sought to excuse his conduct by charging the French with bad faith, but in discussing the matter with himself he was frank. "It is not well to violate one's word without cause," he wrote, "and thus far I have had no reason to complain of France or of my allies. One gains the reputation of a changeable man and a trifler if he does not execute the projects he has formed, and if he often passes from one side to the other."[3] But the arguments in favor of deserting his allies addressed themselves more strongly to Frederick's mind. The French tactics were bad, he wrote, and their armies would probably be defeated; in working for Saxony he was helping to make a neighbor more powerful, and, he added, in a tone of offended morality which is very rare in his secret papers, a neighbor that was treating the House of Austria with ingratitude. The war was expensive, he continued, and the reverses of fortune

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, ii. 127.

[2] *Hist. de mon temps*, i. 6.

[3] "Exposé des raisons que je puis avoir pour rester dans l'alliance de France."

might cause him to lose what he had gained up to that point.[1]

In pursuance of such views his minister, Königgrätz, intimated to Lord Hyndford that if Frederick could have Silesia, and reasonable satisfaction were given his allies, he was willing to make peace.[2] The English negotiator at once objected to anything for the allies, and he was informed that this condition would not be insisted upon.[3] But while Frederick was willing that his allies should have nothing, he was resolved to obtain Silesia for himself, and his advances were coldly received. Maria Theresa was reluctant to yield anything when fortune was darkest, and she protested against any concessions when the prospect seemed brighter. The English negotiator was discouraged by the summary manner in which Frederick had violated the armistice of October, and hesitated about making any other agreement. What hold could there be, wrote Hyndford, on a prince who was without truth and honor and religion?[4] Not only was Maria Theresa unwilling to agree on terms, but she said also that it was useless to treat with Frederick, because he would be bound by no promise; she would indeed consent to cede Silesia, but only on the condition that Frederick should actually furnish an army for her assistance, and declare war upon his former allies. "He cannot object to this," she said, with sarcastic reference to the zeal he had expressed for the welfare of Germany; "this will secure for him

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, ii. 98–100.

[2] *Ib.*, ii. 84.

[3] *Ib.*, ii. 84 *et seq.* Report of interview with Podewils, published by Grünhagen.

[4] Dispatch of May 17, 1742; Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 158.

the glory of being the liberator of his country and the restorer of public tranquillity."[1]

It was not for such ends that Frederick intended to involve himself in further warfare, but he recognized the fact that distrust of his word was an obstacle to obtaining the peace he sought. As he never endeavored to deceive himself about his modes of procedure, so his feelings were not hurt by the unfavorable views which his neighbors formed of them. "An obstacle to any treaty," he wrote Podewils, "is the suspicion of the court of Vienna that we shall treat them after the peace as we did after the protocol of Schnellendorf."[2] "You must assure the English ambassador that we will not break our engagements," he told his minister, but the effort was not successful, and Maria Theresa refused to offer satisfactory terms.

The only way for Frederick to obtain peace was to show once more how dangerous was his hostility. "The queen of Hungary has made every offer and proposition to detach me from the alliance," he wrote Fleury, after she had refused to accede to the terms which he himself had proposed, "but it is trouble wasted. The only thing to do at present is to act cordially together."[3] But while preparing to try again the chances of battle, he bade his minister continue his relations with Hyndford, in order to have "a back staircase which we can use in case of fire."[4]

On the 17th of May, 1742, he encountered the Austrian army at Chotusitz, and after a hard-fought

[1] *Mém. pour Robinson*, April 30, 1742, cited by Arneth.
[2] Frederick to Podewils, April 21, 1742.
[3] *Ib.* to Fleury, March 15 and May 14, 1742.
[4] *Pol. Cor.*, ii. 133.

battle, in which eight thousand men fell, Frederick gained a decisive victory. He did not pursue the defeated army; he wished to show Maria Theresa that her generals could not contend against his genius, and he did not wish to weaken her forces unnecessarily.[1]

The lesson was learned, and the queen consented to follow the advice of her English friends and make peace with Frederick. The conditions were soon agreed upon; in June, 1742, the treaty of Breslau was signed, and by it practically all of Silesia, together with Glatz, was ceded to Prussia. Frederick agreed to abandon his allies, and to remain neutral in the war between them and Austria.[2]

The province for which Frederick had struggled with such ability and such bad faith was at last his, and it greatly increased the power of the Prussian kingdom. Twenty years before, Prussia had counted for no more than Saxony or Bavaria; now, no one disputed her place as one of the great powers of Europe. Frederick was justly triumphant, and there was much exultation at Berlin over the happy termination of the war.

Though Frederick's desertion of his allies was the salvation of Maria Theresa, the sacrifice by which she had bought her peace rankled in her mind. The fairest jewel in her crown was gone, she said; she could not see a Silesian without bursting into tears.[3]

There was no longer any reason for concealment,

[1] To annihilate the defeated army of Prince Charles "lag in des Königs Hand ; es lag nicht in seiner Absicht," says Droysen, Frederick's most enthusiastic eulogist, i. 452.

[2] The preliminaries were signed at Breslau, the final treaty at Berlin.

[3] Dispatch of Robinson, cited by Raumer.

and when the French ambassador asked Frederick to furnish troops for the relief of Prague, he declined the request. "I will speak to you frankly," said the king; "affairs are in a desperate condition. I am endeavoring to make peace for myself."[1] "In the bitterness of my heart," he wrote Fleury, "I have been obliged to save myself from inevitable shipwreck and gain the port as best I could."[2] The bitterness of his heart he expressed to Podewils in a different fashion. "It is a grand and happy result that puts this house in possession of one of the most flourishing provinces of Germany. One should stop at the right moment: to force fortune is to lose it;" and he expressed to his minister a just confidence in his ability to retain his conquests. "My security," he wrote, "is founded on a good army, a full treasury, and strong fortresses."[3]

Frederick had also to announce the unpleasant intelligence to the unfortunate emperor. "If my sword can no longer serve you, my pen shall," he told him, and, with a refinement of sarcasm, he bade Charles VII. to have a special care of his person, and to remember that the safety of the empire depended on his life.[4] "This was a deadly blow," the poor emperor noted in his diary, when he was informed of the treaty of Breslau. To all his former allies the king now gave the judicious but unpalatable advice that they should make peace on the best terms they could get.[5]

[1] Valori to Amelot, June 11, 1742.
[2] Frederick to Fleury, June 18.
[3] *Pol. Cor.*, ii. 197, 213.
[4] Frederick to emperor, June 18 and July 5.
[5] *Ib.* to Fleury, June 13, 1742; to emperor, same date.

It has been repeatedly said that Fleury was negotiating with Austria, and that a letter of his was shown Frederick and determined him to make a separate peace. Often as the statement has been made, there is not a scrap of evidence to sustain the charge. No such letter has ever been found; Frederick would have been pleased to furnish such an excuse for his conduct, but he never asserted that such a letter was shown him.[1] In his memoirs he has stated in general terms that he had reason to believe that the French were acting in bad faith, but in his private memoranda he recorded alike the truth and his own belief. "The affairs of Germany are in such a condition that the cardinal cannot abandon them without losing his credit in Europe, and having another war on his hands still more disastrous."[2] "I defy the queen of Hungary to make a separate peace with France," he wrote to Podewils.[3] Frederick made no attempt to reproach his allies with bad faith when he announced his own defection; he contented himself with saying that the force of events had compelled him to take this step; he was their superior in duplicity as much as in ability.

The news of Frederick's desertion carried dismay to all his former allies, but especially to the French. Their policy in Germany had been based upon the

[1] The falsity of this story, circulated by Frederick's admirers and repeated by historians without examination, has been conclusively shown by the Duc de Broglie in his *Frédéric II. et Marie Thérèse.* The series of books which the Duc de Broglie has published on the war of the Austrian Succession are models of historical writing: they are scholarly, judicious, and interesting.

[2] "Exposé des raisons que je puis avoir pour rester dans l'alliance de France."

[3] Frederick to Podewils, June 8, 1742.

Prussian alliance; it was with the help of the Prussian army that they hoped to extend the dominions of the House of Bavaria, and to destroy the predominance of the House of Austria.[1] Relying upon Frederick's coöperation, the French armies had penetrated into Bohemia, more than a month's march from their own frontiers; deserted by their ally, they found themselves in a condition of great peril.

Frederick's conduct was not a surprise to all. Fleury had always distrusted the king and disapproved of the war. Belle Isle, on the other hand, the chief advocate of the policy which had been adopted, had been Frederick's earnest admirer; he had arranged the terms of the alliance between France and Prussia; he now saw with consternation his great political combination threatened with ruin by Prussia's withdrawal from it. Not only was the outlook gloomy, but the treaty of Breslau worked a disastrous change in his own position. For a while he had been before the eyes of all Europe; he had filled the great rôle of an emperor maker; he had been extolled by his countrymen as a man of new ideas and original genius, arising among a host of political mediocrities. But in the dejection which followed Frederick's desertion, what had been extolled as a policy of genius was denounced as a policy of adventure; the emperor maker became a political charlatan, whose rashness had involved France in serious danger, and upon whose credulity Frederick had played to advance his own ends.[2]

[1] See this stated in letters of Belle Isle to Amelot.

[2] "Nous n'aurions jamais commencé cette guerre si nous n'avions compté sur l'alliance du roi de Prusse." Amelot to Vauréal, February 3, 1743, *Cor. d'Esp.*

The counsels of Belle Isle were no longer potent at Versailles, and Fleury was eager for peace on any terms. Unfortunately, he had excited the animosity of an antagonist who never forgave a wrong, who was as warlike as he was peaceful, who believed her cause to be that of religion and justice, and who wished to visit upon France the vengeance which she had been unable to inflict upon Frederick.

Saxony promptly followed Prussia's example, and the elector obtained peace by abandoning his claims on the Austrian Succession. But the advances made by France were received in a different spirit. Belle Isle was instructed to seek an interview with the Austrian general, and to rescue the French army at Prague from its perilous position on the best terms he could obtain. To beg for peace was a distasteful task for one who had hoped to overthrow the power of Austria. "Of all the sacrifices I have made for the king," he wrote, "nothing has cost me as much as my interview with Marshal Königsegg." The unwelcome duty was made more disagreeable by the contemptuous indifference with which the Austrians received these overtures.

Belle Isle offered to abandon Bohemia if Bavaria were restored to the emperor, but Maria Theresa had no thought of letting her enemies escape on such terms. She wished to hold Bavaria to punish the emperor, and she wished for the unconditional surrender of the army at Prague to punish the French; she must have indemnity for the past and security for the future, and, in short, Königsegg said that he was not prepared to state any terms on which peace could be made.[1]

[1] Belle Isle to Amelot, July 26, 1742; Königsegg to Belle Isle, July 31, 1742.

The overbearing conduct of Austria plunged Fleury in despair; he made a last effort to smooth the way for a reconciliation, but he succeeded only in exciting the ridicule of his enemies and the regrets of his friends. His skill in the art of putting things, a certain honeyed sweetness of style, had often served him in emergencies, and by such means he now hoped to soften the asperity of Maria Theresa. In a long letter, which he addressed to Königsegg, he complained that he was unjustly accused of fostering the war against Austria. "Many know," he said, "how opposed I was to the measures which were adopted, and that I was, so to speak, forced to consent. You can easily divine who determined the king to adopt a policy so contrary to my tastes and my principles. If I could have conferred with you," he continued, "it might have been possible to prevent a war which has caused such calamities and cost so much blood. God did not allow it, and I can truly say that this has been the chief bitterness of my whole life. But these great misfortunes are not beyond remedy. You know too well the uncertainty of affairs not to agree that with whatever success God favors one, neither humanity, nor religion, nor even good policy allow it to be abused."[1]

The amiable cardinal was dealing with merciless foes. This lamentable epistle was at once given to the press, and was read by all Europe; its author became the jest of every diplomat, and its only effect was to render Maria Theresa more confident, and to strengthen her resolve to make no peace except at the price of French territory. She replied to these propositions for peace in a letter full of invective against

[1] Fleury to Königsegg, July 11, 1742.

France, and declared that it was alike just and necessary to repair the wrongs that had been done, and to protect herself against such enterprises in the future.[1]

Nothing remained but to continue the war, and the condition of the army in Bohemia was now full of peril. Its numbers had been reduced by disease, battle, and desertion; the Saxon contingent had been withdrawn, and Bavaria could furnish no assistance. No longer obliged to keep an army with which to oppose Frederick, Maria Theresa could concentrate all her forces about Prague. The French had entered the country as conquerors, and it seemed probable that they would leave it only on their parole as prisoners of war.

The rashness of attempting conquests in the heart of Germany was now evident; from the Rhine to Prague was a march of forty days, and any reinforcements must cross the mountain range which divided Bohemia from Bavaria, where a small force could check the advance of an army. It was equally difficult for the forces at Prague to retreat, and in August the Austrians invested the place.

The situation was rendered worse by constant bickerings between the leaders. Belle Isle and Broglie were associated in the command, and no combination could have been more unfortunate. Fleury was inclined to choose old men for his generals, and Broglie was past threescore and ten when he was sent to the army in Bohemia. He was infirm as well as old, and his enemies whispered that a partial attack of paralysis had benumbed the moderate capacity he had possessed when younger. Belle Isle regarded him with a contempt which he made no effort to conceal. "I

[1] *Cor. de Vienne*, August 10, 1742.

agree with all the army," he wrote of his colleague to the minister of war, "as to his incapacity and his dotage. We are sure that nothing could be worse."[1] The cardinal feared that Belle Isle's zeal against the House of Austria had been too pronounced for him to conduct with advantage negotiations for peace, and Broglie was substituted in his place. It was a judicious change, replied Belle Isle; he himself had carried out the desires of the king as to the choice of an emperor, and had overcome the hostility of the German princes towards France, while Broglie had caused the ruin of the French army, had alienated the king of Prussia, and by his inefficiency had rendered the greatest services to the court of Vienna; it was natural that he should be an acceptable negotiator to the queen for whom he had procured such advantages.[2]

To such attacks Broglie retorted by saying that Belle Isle was constantly forming rash and chimerical plans, which would result in the destruction of the army if any one were mad enough to try to put them into execution, and that he lay on his bed all day, covering reams of paper with counsels and reproaches that nobody had the time to read.

A French army of forty thousand men under the command of Marshal Maillebois had been stationed in Germany in order to overawe the electors and compel the neutrality of Hanover; it was now decided to send these troops to the relief of the army in Bohemia. In the latter part of August the march began, and in September they reached Eger. But their most serious difficulties now began. At the news of their approach the Austrians reluctantly raised the

[1] Belle Isle to Breteuil, September 20, 1742.

[2] *Ib.* to Amelot, July, 1742.

siege of Prague, and endeavored to prevent the further advance of the French under Maillebois.

The marshal was a man well stricken in years and of moderate ability, and the instructions under which he acted would have checked the success of an abler and a more enterprising general. Whatever else he did with his soldiers, said his orders, he must not let them fight. This was the last army which the French had in the field: its advance to Bavaria left France open to invasion; a defeat would be fatal; even a victory would prove a questionable blessing, for it would excite the enemy to attempt a diversion by invading France.[1] When such instructions were to be executed by a septuagenarian general, it was not strange that nothing was accomplished. After much delay Maillebois started to cross the mountains which separate Eger from Prague, but the season was already advanced; the weather was unfavorable, and the roads were impassable for cannon; the attempt was abandoned, and the army fell back to Eger. Three months of marching backward and forward without result had discouraged the soldiers and impaired their discipline. If few were lost in fighting, many perished from sickness; an army of forty thousand men had marched across Germany to relieve Prague, and was obliged to abandon the undertaking.

Broglie was now given the command in Bavaria, and Belle Isle was left in Prague, with orders to extricate himself as best he could. The army shut up in that city presented a very different spectacle from the forty thousand good troops who had entered the town a year before. Their numbers had been reduced

[1] Documents cited in *Campagnes de Maillebois;* Maillebois to Breteuil, September 21, 1742, *Mém. de Noailles.*

to eighteen thousand, and of these four thousand were unfit for service; they were dying at the rate of thirty a day; they were ill provided with supplies; their horses had been killed; the officers had come out in search of glory, but they had found only privation; they had come to win promotion in pitched battles, they had been engaged in obscure skirmishes, and now had the prospect of a long and painful retreat to be made on foot; the soldiers had little confidence in their leaders, and were equally despondent and discouraged.[1] All had been looking forward to a speedy relief from their troubles by the arrival of Maillebois's army. It was now announced that all hope of succor must be abandoned; the Austrian forces again gathered about Prague, and the French general might well have felt that nothing remained but to surrender on the best terms that could be obtained.

Whatever were Belle Isle's faults, he possessed energy and courage in a very high degree. Never for a moment did he entertain the idea of a surrender; there was indeed no hope of saving Prague, but he was ready to encounter any peril rather than allow the army under his command to become prisoners of war. "To surrender," he wrote, "would be so humiliating that the thought of such a result fills me with horror; it is infinitely more glorious for the nation and the king to fight and perish with our arms in our hands."[2]

In addition to the difficulties of the situation, Belle Isle's health was infirm, but no sickness could abate his energy, and he resolved to make his way to Bavaria or perish in the attempt. In Eger he would be

[1] *MSS. Mém. de Belle Isle*, v. 336 *et seq.*

[2] Belle Isle to Breteuil, October, 1742.

safe, but from Prague to Eger was a march of one hundred miles, and he must cross the Böhmerwald mountains, which in midwinter would be almost impassable even if there were no enemy to hinder. In order to have any chance of a safe retreat, it was necessary to escape from the city unobserved by the Austrian patrols. The task was difficult, but it was accomplished; preparations were quickly made, and the secret was kept, not only from the enemy, but from the citizens of Prague, who would soon have revealed it to the Austrian commander. A little after midnight on the 17th of December, by the light of a winter's moon, fourteen thousand men with thirty cannon marched quietly out of the gates of Prague, and crossed with all possible haste the great plain that surrounds the city. The cold was intense, the wind blew sharply from the north, and the ground was covered with snow, but the soldiers marched twenty-four hours with hardly any respite, and reached the foot of the mountains before the Austrians discovered their escape.

The greatest difficulties were still before them. The most feasible route to Eger skirted the mountains and passed through what is now the famous watering-place of Carlsbad, but on this road the Austrian cavalry could precede the fugitives and burn the bridges over the river. Belle Isle therefore resolved to take his army by the wild and little frequented paths which went directly over the mountains; there at least it would be impossible for the Austrian troops to get ahead of them and block the way. The natural difficulties were appalling, and every hour was important. Each day the army was on the march long before daylight, in the intense cold

of the early morning; horses and men slipped on the icy roads and were lost in the abysses, by the side of which the mountain paths ran; many were overcome by the cold; they lay down to die, and there was no time to stop for those who fell by the way. As the soldiers struggled over the icy heights in the pale moonlight, they seemed like a host of apparitions, as phantasmal as the dreams of conquest in pursuit of which they had been brought a thousand miles from their homes. Nine days after leaving Prague the French reached Eger; over one thousand men had perished on the march, and the condition of the survivors was lamentable; but they were not prisoners of war, they had not lost a piece of cannon, and the honor of the army was saved.[1]

Even the infirm remnant which had been left at Prague obtained favorable terms. As soon as Belle Isle's escape was known they were summoned to surrender. "Unless those who are in condition to bear arms can be allowed to retire with the honors of war," replied their commander, "we will set fire to the four corners of Prague and perish in its ruins." Prince Lobkowitz thought that the capture of a few hundred infirm soldiers would be dearly bought by the destruction of a city, and he agreed to these conditions. His own palace was in Prague, said Maria Theresa in her rage, and that was why he granted the French terms. The most of those whom Belle Isle had left in the hospitals summoned up sufficient en-

[1] The best account of the retreat from Prague is in the *MSS. Mémoires* of Belle Isle, and in his reports to Breteuil. Vauvenargues took part in the retreat and has described its privations and its miseries, from the effects of which he never recovered.

ergy to appear under arms and avail themselves of the terms of the capitulation. To the great annoyance of the Austrian general, nearly all of the four thousand soldiers in the city marched out before him and rejoined their comrades in Bavaria.[1]

The retreat from Prague ranks high in the annals of heroism, but Belle Isle did not receive from his countrymen the applause for which he hoped. All were so wearied of the disasters of the Bohemian campaign that the escape of the relics of a defeated army excited no enthusiasm. The troops went into winter quarters, and Belle Isle returned to France, which he had left with such glowing hopes two years before, to find himself, if not actually in disgrace, yet a much less influential personage than he had been.

In the mean time an event long anticipated had at last taken place, and the career of Cardinal Fleury was ended. The cardinal's constitution was vigorous and his health had been preserved by a temperate life, but the marks of great age had long been apparent. As he approached his ninetieth year, there were frequent rumors that he wished to lift the burdens of state from his aged shoulders, and to seek a season of repose before he died. If such hopes were entertained by those impatient of his rule, they were doomed to disappointment. Fleury was not a very ambitious man by nature, but when well advanced in years he had tasted the sweetness of power; he found it agreeable, and only with life would he part with his authority. In his last years he became infirm, and it was impossible for him to do the work which devolved upon the chief minister of a great kingdom, but he would delegate no authority, he was jealous of any

[1] *Mém de Belle Isle*, v.

division of power; though his hands were trembling, never for one moment would he relinquish their hold upon the reins of state.

In the latter part of 1742, it became plain that in the long contest between death and the cardinal, the victory of the former could not be much longer delayed. The old man's sight was dim and his hearing was dull; one day the end would seem at hand, and he would prepare to receive the viaticum; on the next he would revive and preside at a meeting of the council, though his mind was as dull as his physical vision. "The cardinal is like a candle," wrote an observer, "which flickers up just as it seems about to go out, but each time with less force."[1] Every symptom was critically watched by a court where almost all were impatient for the end to come. "To-day he is taking goat's milk," writes one, "but goat's milk is of no use for old men."

Public business was almost suspended during the weeks that Fleury lay between life and death. "The cardinal is dying," wrote the Prussian minister, "and the king will decide nothing while he lives; the ministers will give no directions in matters of importance lest the cardinal should be offended; everything remains in suspense."[2] The people wearied of this long death agony. "The public is beginning to be impatient," writes a chronicler, "that the cardinal is so long about dying."[3] On the 29th of January, 1743, the end came. "At last the cardinal is dead," was the expression on every lip.[4] He was in his

[1] Letters of Tencin and Broglie, December and January.
[2] Chambrier to Frederick, November 26, 1742.
[3] *Journal de Police*, January 20, 1743.
[4] Argenson, January 30, 1743.

ninetieth year, and for seventeen years he had been the ruler of France.

In vigor of intellect, Fleury was inferior to the three cardinals who, within a century, had held the same office and exercised an equal authority; he did not possess the original genius nor the dauntless resolution of Richelieu; in skill of political combination, in acuteness of political foresight, he was not the equal of Mazarin; far superior to Dubois in character, he was his inferior in intellectual acumen. Yet if a man is entitled to be called a great statesman who exercises power with judgment, with justice, with a sincere desire for the welfare of the people, Fleury should receive that meed of praise. In a day when corruption was common, he kept his hands clean from unjust gains; he was fond of power, but he was not selfish in his use of it. Richelieu, Mazarin, and Colbert had used the resources of the state to indulge in a magnificent pomp: they had built palaces, they had accumulated great estates, they had left great fortunes. Fleury showed the elevation of his mind in regarding such things as of small importance. No one was more indifferent to spectacular display, to those external insignia of power which please the vain and impress the vulgar. He could have had surroundings more splendid than those of Richelieu, and have accumulated a fortune larger than that of Mazarin: he chose to lead a life of extreme simplicity. He gave freely to charity, and died, comparatively speaking, a poor man.[1]

When we consider his administration, it must be pronounced, for the most part, wise and beneficial; if the condition of the people did not show marked

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, iv. 401.

improvement, yet on the whole it was ameliorated, and the cardinal sought to secure for them the greatest of blessings, the blessing of peace. He was avaricious in his care of the public expenditure, but such avarice is a virtue in a ruler; he established order in the finances; he stopped the frequent depreciations of the currency, which for centuries had checked business development; he helped to prepare the way for a great increase in wealth and commercial activity. He had no taste for war, yet by adroit diplomacy he secured for his country a valuable addition of territory; if he did not increase the influence of France as did Richelieu, nor enlarge her boundaries as much as Mazarin, the acquisition of Lorraine was due to his judicious policy; it added to the strength of France, and it promoted the well-being of the inhabitants of that province; the annexation made France greater and Lorraine happier.

It was unfortunate for Fleury's fame that he lived so long. The participation of France in the war of the Austrian Succession was the great mistake, it may be called the great crime, of his administration; if we recognize the good judgment which saw the folly of such a course, we must condemn the weakness that consented to it. The close of Fleury's life presented a melancholy spectacle. It was a sad sight to see the old man dying by inches, weak in body, infirm in purpose; acquiescing sadly in a policy of which he disapproved; clinging to a power which he could no longer exercise; surrounded by men who watched with eagerness his increasing cough, his tottering step, his blurred eye; with physicians bringing drugs that could be of no avail, and priests waiting to administer the last rites to one reluctant to receive them;

while the ministers of state sat idly by their portfolios, and the king came weeping from the sick man's chamber, and went away to seek consolation from Mme. de la Tournelle. But if we consider Fleury's life and career as a whole, we must place him among those who have well served their country and are entitled to its gratitude.

The rule of Fleury had for some time been weak and fluctuating; it was succeeded by administrative anarchy. The king sought to imitate Louis XIV., and declared that in the future he would have no prime minister, but would himself control his government. Seventeen years before he had made the same announcement, but it had proved only a form of words, for Fleury became prime minister, in fact if not in name. The second announcement was in part verified, for no minister succeeded to Fleury's power; but the king did not perform his promise and exercise a personal control over the administration. He imitated Louis XIV. in having no head to the government except the king, but, as he failed to act in that capacity himself, the government was left with no head at all. For a while, indeed, Louis attended the councils of his ministers, and seemed to interest himself in the affairs of the state. These attempts at personal rule were welcomed by the people; the French liked a king who governed; no fainéant monarch was ever popular among them, and the belief was still strong that the king himself could do no wrong, that he was wise and just, and the evils of government were due to the ministers, and not to the sovereign.

Louis XV. soon wearied of the rôle which he had undertaken. It was not because he was unequal to the task; in intelligence he was superior to Louis

XIV.: when he discussed political questions his remarks often showed unusual sagacity; he saw the true policy to be pursued at the death of Charles VI., though he was too indifferent to overrule the brawlers who cried for war; he pointed out the evils of some of the ruinous treaties to which France became a party, — but on all such occasions he contented himself with criticism; if his ministers saw fit to commit follies, he would not stand in their way.

The details of administration, the monotonous work, the long sessions at the council table, spent in listening to prosy ministers, — all this bored him, and he did not care enough for the interests of the state to subject himself to such annoyances; indifference to everything except his own amusement was the besetting sin of Louis XV. "Nothing affects him in the council," wrote Tencin. "He appears to be absolutely indifferent. . . . He signs unread whatever is presented to him. One is paralyzed by the little interest the king takes, and by the profound silence he observes."[1] Apathy was the foundation of his character, said another minister; he was incapable of love or hate.[2]

When the king would give no orders, each minister was left to administer his department in accordance with his own notions. Four ministers, said Luynes, divided among them the power of Fleury, and the only question on which they agreed was the exclusion from the council of every one of whose influence they were jealous.[3] As no one will controlled them, they

[1] Letters of Tencin, June 20, August 29, October 3, 1743.

[2] Count of Argenson, cited by Tencin, September 16, 1743; *Mém. de Tencin*, October 10, 1743.

[3] *Mém. de Luynes*, July, 1743.

were often at variance and their disputes became rancorous; at some of the councils, said one who was a member of them, the debates were so violent that one could not have heard the thunder of the Almighty amid the din.[1]

The king's unwillingness to be annoyed affected the choice of his ministers. Earlier in the reign Chauvelin had shown such ability that he excited Fleury's jealousy and was summarily dismissed. He was long regarded as the man most likely to fill the cardinal's place, but he was never recalled to office. An injudicious letter offended the king, but it was said at court, and probably with truth, that what really excluded him from the royal councils was Louis's aversion to his manners. Chauvelin was given to pleasantries, his talk was familiar, his voice was loud, and in such matters the king was finical: he was annoyed by any one who lacked the ease of good breeding, the graceful bow, the well-attuned voice, the discreet and ready answer, which were found in the perfect courtier, and no skill in affairs atoned for manners that were disagreeable.

The men who occupied places in the council after Fleury's death were none of them persons of great ability. Frederick said that the finances were intrusted to a captain of dragoons, the department of war to an attorney, and foreign affairs to a man who imitated Fleury as a hunchback might imitate the *première danseuse* of the ballet. If the criticism was harsh, it was not without justification. Orry, who had been a captain of cavalry, had charge of the finances, — a man of large experience and of moderate parts. Amelot, the secretary for foreign affairs, displeased

[1] Argenson to Broglie, May 13, 1743.

the public by his timidity and the king by his stuttering, and he was presently dismissed. Argenson, though he had been bred to the law, was a creditable secretary of war; less could be said in favor of the Count of Maurepas, who had been made a secretary of state at the age of fourteen, and now had charge of the navy. Maurepas was celebrated for his wit, for his literary collections, and for his scandalous epigrams, but though he knew much of many things, he knew little of the department of which he was the head.

The ablest man among the ministers was Cardinal Tencin. A protégé of Dubois, he had secured his promotion to the cardinalate by the methods employed by his patron; his moral character was hopelessly bad, but he was a man of intelligence and capacity. His early success in life he owed to his sister, and her character deserves some attention as illustrating the curious social conditions which prevailed in the age of Louis XV. Beginning life at a convent, she fled from it and renounced her vows, and for many years led a life as brilliant as it was immoral. It was on account of her charms, as was said, that her brother found favor with Cardinal Dubois, and the famous Alembert was her illegitimate child. Yet, notwithstanding a career in which there was not even a pretense of virtue, the talents, the conversation, the address of Mme. de Tencin gained her a recognized position in society; as years went on her conduct became more discreet, and her salon was one of the most brilliant in Paris. She was a power at court and in literature; she was consulted in political intrigues; she helped to make and mar literary reputations, and if her own books were of such a character

that she did not openly acknowledge them, they were none the less read.

The brother was like the sister. An archbishop and a cardinal, his ecclesiastical dignities did not prevent his becoming a close ally of the Duke of Richelieu, the nobleman who took charge of the intrigues of the back stairs.

Such intrigues, unfortunately, it was impossible to neglect during the reign of Louis XV. At Versailles, as at some oriental court, a revolution of the seraglio often affected the destinies of the state. Whether Châteauroux or Pompadour or Du Barry was the king's mistress was of more political importance than whether Tencin or Bernis or Choiseul was the king's minister; indeed, the choice of the latter was often due to the caprice of the former.

It was not until 1742 that affairs of this nature assumed a political character, and the Duchess of Châteauroux was the first of the favorites who sought to rule the kingdom. Louis had already chosen two mistresses from the noble house of Nesle, but one of the sisters died, and Mme. de Mailly, the next in order, had little beauty and less sprightliness. The king had been attracted to her because she was thrown in his way; he now wearied of his choice, and declared his weariness with the discourteous frankness that was habitual with him. "That woman has bored me for a year," he said, "and that is quite enough."

Another member of the family was ready for the succession. Mme. de la Tournelle was a younger sister, and was now twenty-five. She was beautiful, brilliant, and ambitious, and such a woman could exercise a large influence upon the king. In England, aspiring politicians would have intrigued for the ele-

vation of a minister; in France, Richelieu and his associates devoted their energies to the selection of a friendly mistress. The first step was to bring the future favorite to Versailles, and even this was not altogether easy. Though the palace was large, the number of noblemen and dignitaries desiring quarters in it was still larger. There was difficulty in finding a place for a new-comer, but Richelieu was equal to the task. It was with especial pleasure that a disciple of Voltaire found a bishop ready to assist in so edifying an intrigue. Mme. de la Tournelle was established in the quarters assigned to the Bishop of Rennes, and the king and his adviser there visited her, disguised as physicians, in order to escape the notice of the court.[1]

No disguise was necessary to save the susceptibilities of the new favorite. She was not a woman to be led from virtue by any transient passion; she made her bargain with as much precision as the most careful merchant of the city, and was entirely willing that it should be known.

Mme. de la Tournelle demanded a separate establishment, of which the expenses should be paid, besides thirty thousand livres a month for servants and dress and gambling, and she said that she must be made a duchess. Moreover, royal lovers were fickle, and this practical lady provided for every emergency; in the diplomatic language which she used, "when she retired," she was to receive a pension of twenty-five thousand livres.[2] Her demands were acceded to; the price was paid, and the rank was bestowed. "The position of mistress of the king," said a satirist, "is

[1] *Mém. de Brancas*, 61 *et pas.*

[2] See papers cited in Broglie's *Frédéric II. et Louis XV.*

now a dignity; one says to her, 'the position to which you have been elevated;' she replies, 'the position which I occupy.'"[1]

When we read the details of this amazing bargain, we think it must be some common prostitute who thus haggles over the price of her dishonor. Far from it; the family of Nesle was ancient, if not illustrious, and its place in the French nobility could not be disputed. The future mistress was the daughter of a marquis; the lover was a king; the details of the bargain were arranged by a duke; the intrigue was favored by a cardinal and furthered by a bishop; such a negotiation, conducted by the most distinguished members of the aristocracy and approved by the highest dignitaries of the church, is an illustration of the moral condition of the upper classes under Louis XV.

It was an established usage of this extraordinary era that the king's mistress should become one of the ladies in waiting on the king's wife. Marie Leszczynski was long-suffering, but the publicity and the scandal of this new selection overcame even her patience. "She looks very black," the favorite wrote gleefully to Richelieu. "By the law of the game this is the privilege of those who lose."[2]

In the following year Mme. de la Tournelle was made Duchess of Châteauroux, and received a domain yielding eighty-five thousand livres a year. "A promotion due," so said the letters patent of Louis XV., "not only to the services rendered to the crown by her illustrious family, but to the qualities of heart she has displayed since she has been attached to the

[1] Cited in *Journal d'Argenson.*

[2] Letter cited by Broglie, *Frédéric II. et Louis XV.*

queen, our dear spouse, and which have secured for her universal esteem." The Duke of Richelieu and the Duchess of Châteauroux are not edifying characters to study; but they exercised a considerable influence upon the king of France; the steps which he took under their guidance helped to weaken monarchical traditions among the French people, and they must not be disregarded in considering the events which prepared the way for a social revolution.

While the attention of Versailles was occupied with the choice of a mistress and the death of a cardinal, the war continued its course. The retreat from Prague had saved the relics of an army, and fortune had been so unfavorable that even this escape from calamity was received with thankfulness.[1] But the condition of affairs in the spring of 1743 was far different from what it had been when eighty thousand French soldiers crossed the Rhine to overawe the electoral diet, and assist in the dismemberment of the Austrian empire. The French would now have been glad to make peace, if the emperor of their choice could have been assured the enjoyment of his dignity and of his hereditary possessions, abandoning all claims on those of Maria Theresa; they would have gained nothing by three years of war except an empty dignity for a friend, which on his death would surely revert to the House of Austria. It was impossible to obtain peace even on these terms. The English were now heartily engaged in the war; with their own soldiers, and the Hanoverians and Hessians in their pay, they had forty thousand men in the field, and they furnished Maria Theresa a subsidy of three hundred thousand pounds. Carteret was eager for war,

[1] *Dis. Ven.*, t. 234, 50.

and seconded the desires of George II. The command of the English army was given to Stair, and he assured the Austrian ministers that now was the moment to destroy forever the ascendency of France on the Continent; Alsace and Lorraine, with parts of Burgundy and Artois, must be taken from the offending nation and divided between Austria and the emperor.[1] In his memoirs Frederick has ridiculed Belle Isle for his perplexities as to the proper disposition of some of the territories to be taken from Maria Theresa. Lord Stair seems to have been equally uncertain what to do with the various provinces of which France was now to be despoiled.

While Maria Theresa was eager to wreak her vengeance on all her enemies, the English were ready to grant reasonable terms to the emperor, who was only a political cipher. Such views were not acceptable to their ally. When the English talked of attacking France, Maria Theresa agreed with them, and when they advised granting terms to the emperor, she abused them as faint-hearted and false to their agreement. Among all the rulers of Europe no one was more relentless, more indifferent to the waste of human life or the increase of public misery, than the queen of Hungary; in adversity, she was a sublime figure, but when pursuing her vengeance or her ambition, she was as harsh and stubborn as Elizabeth of Spain. Her English allies, she complained, had already forced her to surrender Silesia to obtain peace from Frederick, and they now insisted that she should sacrifice further territory to obtain the aid of Charles Emmanuel; but if these lukewarm friends compelled

[1] Stair to Königsegg, July 16, 1742; *Ref. Sec.*, June 17, 1742, cited in Arneth, *Maria Theresia*, t. ii.

her to build up the power of the rival houses of Brandenburg and Sardinia, France must furnish the compensation as a penalty for having started this iniquitous war. As for the emperor, she declared that if he was no longer formidable, he was none the less blamable; she refused to recognize his title, and would grant him no terms unless he proved his repentance by declaring war upon France.[1] If he would do that, and surrender Bavaria to her, the allies might be willing to conquer for him some French provinces.

The French were now anxious to abandon Germany and concentrate their forces, in order to repel the invasion with which their own country was threatened; having started a war to dismember the Austrian empire, they had now to continue it to save their own land from dismemberment.

Though it was difficult if not impossible to sustain their army in Bavaria, yet its withdrawal would leave their unfortunate ally, the emperor, in grievous plight. He could not defend himself against the Austrians; he would remain an exile from his hereditary dominions, a fugitive dependent on the charity of friends. It was natural that he should protest bitterly against such a policy. "I see myself," wrote the unfortunate sovereign to Louis XV., "despoiled of all my states, obliged to wander from asylum to asylum in the midst of that empire of which I am the chief."[2] Charles VII. had already been chased from Munich, and had found shelter in the free city of Frankfort, the nominal capital of the shadowy empire of which he was the head. So entirely had real power been

[1] *Tagebuch Karl's VII.*, 72–79; Arneth, t. ii.

[2] Charles VII. to Louis XV., June 24, 1743.

stripped from his office that the successor of Charlemagne and Otto the Great could not command from all the states which owed him allegiance enough money to pay his valets, or enough soldiers to form a body-guard. His jewels and his furniture were mortgaged, and he tried in vain to obtain a further loan on their security: so deplorable was the condition of a man who nominally was the most exalted sovereign in Christendom. He would be "aut Cæsar, aut nihil," said the wits; "he is 'et Cæsar et nihil.'"[1] Some time before, he sought to borrow six million florins from Frederick II., and offered Bohemia as security. Nothing annoyed that thrifty monarch so much as a demand for money, and he did not regard the emperor's title to Bohemia as satisfactory security for a loan. When Frederick stated his reasons for abandoning his allies, he noted one which undoubtedly influenced his mind,—"The effrontery of the emperor and of the French in asking a loan of six million florins from me without security."[2]

With better success Charles applied to France for help, and the French, having elected a phantom emperor, were now obliged to support him. But while they were willing to dole out money for his necessities, they were unable to hold Bavaria, and they would have been pleased if their ally, who had become a burden, could have obtained peace on reasonable terms. We are content you should make peace on any terms you can get, they told him in substance, so long as you do not become the enemy of France.[3] But Maria Theresa would concede him nothing unless he would declare war on France, and even then would

[1] Barbier, iii. 360.
[2] *Cor. Pol.*, iii. 100.
[3] *Tagebuch*, 91.

concede very little, while Charles was unable to resign the dreams of greatness in which he had so long indulged.

When Belle Isle was on his way home from Prague, he was ordered to stop at Frankfort, to prepare the emperor for the possibility of the abandonment of Bavaria by the French army, and to incline him to moderate his ambitious expectations. "No one can soften this advice better than you," the minister wrote the marshal. It was a melancholy meeting. When they had parted months before, Charles was exulting in the ineffable grandeur with which he felt himself invested, and Belle Isle was confident of the full success of his plans for the overthrow of the House of Austria. Now Charles was a needy fugitive, and it was Belle Isle's unpleasant duty to advise the abandonment of all hopes of any share in the succession of Maria Theresa. The emperor was suffering in body as well as mind, for he was terribly afflicted by the gout. He told Belle Isle of all his woes: so impoverished was he, that even the tradespeople and furnishers would give him no more credit; nothing remained for him, he said, but to abdicate and hide his misery from the world.[1] "In this year," writes Charles in his journal, "I have found the inconsistency of fortune and greatness. The year had but one fortunate day, — the one on which I was elected emperor."[2] He might have said more truly that that day was of all the year the most unfortunate, for his elevation had brought in its train the misfortunes from which he suffered.

The French helped their needy protégé to pay his

[1] *MSS. Mém. de Belle Isle*, v. 350–355.

[2] *Tagebuch*, 74.

servants and his grocers. "I could not resist giving him at least enough to keep him from dying of hunger," wrote Noailles a few months later, but they pursued their plans for the abandonment of Bavaria.[1] The emperor remonstrated in vain. His misfortunes had taught him little; at the first gleam of success he fancied himself returning in triumph to Munich, with Bohemia added to his dominions and his son chosen king of the Romans.[2] On the other hand, in the withdrawal of the French troops from Bavaria he saw himself banished from Munich, and doomed to a needy and precarious existence at Frankfort.

Louis tried to evade the remonstrances of his ally by sending ambiguous instructions to Broglie, but the marshal pursued his plans for evacuation, and in June, 1743, he marched away from Bavaria.[3] Never had such a case of desertion been known, wrote Charles; it was a sad fate for an emperor.[4] Abandoned by his French allies, he now declared himself neutral, and he was willing to relinquish all claims on the Austrian succession if he could again rule tranquilly in his beloved Bavaria.[5] He agreed to these concessions the more willingly because his confessor assured him that he was acting under duress and

[1] Noailles to king, July 8, 1743.

[2] *Mém. de Belle Isle; Tagebuch*, 73, 96, 127, etc.

[3] This movement was held to be contrary to his orders, and Broglie was retired from his command for disobedience. But the ambiguity of his instructions justified almost any step on which he might have decided, and there is no doubt his superiors were glad to have Bavaria abandoned. See the voluminous correspondence between Broglie and the war department for 1743.

[4] *Tagebuch*, 91.

[5] *Ib.*, 96.

could lawfully retract what he now yielded, and again assert his rights, whenever the opportunity offered.[1] Charles kept faith better than most of his brother monarchs, but after all he belonged to his century. It is hard to say what could constitute an agreement that would be regarded as binding at this era; if a treaty was distasteful, neither monarch, nor statesman, nor priest hesitated to declare it void when circumstances had changed, and we find no difference in this code of morals between the rulers who had the most accommodating of Jesuit confessors and those who professed the most advanced free thought; the principles of public faith in Europe at this period did not differ from those which are held by the savages of Ashantee or Dahomey.

No peace could be made on any terms. Carteret tried to befriend the vagrant emperor, but he could not soothe the relentless animosity of Maria Theresa. Charles was not allowed to return to Munich. The Austrians subjected the unfortunate Bavarians to excessive taxation, and compelled them to take an oath of allegiance to Maria Theresa. "This is contrary to the laws of the empire," wrote Charles, who believed the empire was still a reality and not a fiction; "a member who fails to recognize the rights of its chief should be regarded as a rebel and put under the ban."[2] But the ban of the empire in the eighteenth century was more harmless than the ban of the church. "In this century," added Charles, "they make a mock of all that is most sacred in the world."[3]

Domestic losses were added to his misfortunes; a daughter whom he dearly loved died of smallpox, he

[1] *Tagebuch*, 96, 97. [2] *Ib.*, 99. [3] *Ib.*, 136.

was separated from his family; in all Europe there was probably no more unhappy man than the successor of Charlemagne. An emperor without an empire and a sovereign without subjects, his fate excites our sympathy when we consider his kindly and honorable nature; we feel that it was not wholly undeserved when we reflect upon the weakness of his character, the infirmity of his purpose, and the mediocrity of his intelligence.

While Broglie was preparing to abandon the emperor to his fate, the English, Hanoverians, and Austrians, forty-five thousand strong, advanced towards the Rhine. Like most allied armies, they suffered from divided counsels, and they finally encamped at Aschaffenburg on the Main, in a position which was difficult to attack, but from which it was equally difficult to escape. When provisions became scarce, they left their camp and started to march along the stream and make their way through Dettingen to Hanau. The French were under the command of Noailles, and this was the opportunity for which he had waited; the enemy had to move through a narrow plain surrounded by hills, and the only practicable outlet was by Dettingen. In this town Noailles stationed twenty-four thousand men under the Duke of Gramont, with instructions to hold their position and content themselves with repelling any assault, while the batteries from the other side of the river would play upon the enemy as they advanced along the stream. Noailles had taken possession of Aschaffenburg as the English left it, and he proposed to attack them in the rear; the allies were hedged in: it seemed doubtful if they could escape without serious loss, and the French even hoped they might be forced

to surrender. The tactics of Noailles received the commendation of the highest authority in Europe. "It was," said Frederick, "a plan worthy of a great captain." It failed, not from any brilliant inspiration on the part of the enemy, for there was not in the allied army a general above mediocrity, but from a cause which cost the French many a victory, — the recklessness and insubordination of their officers.

The battle began on June 27, 1743, and for a while all went well. Noailles cut off the retreat of the enemy; from across the river batteries did good execution, and the allies made slow progress in extricating themselves from their difficulties. But the Duke of Gramont, who commanded the forces at Dettingen, was a young man who owed his military position to his rank, and not to any experience in the field; he had no qualities which fitted him for command, and he had the defect that made many a French nobleman a danger to the army in which he served, — he was impatient of orders, and desired above all other results from a battle to gain distinction for himself. Gramont wearied of waiting where he had been stationed, and he feared that the battle would be won without his having the glory of winning it. He was intoxicated with the vision of a marshal's baton, said his critics. At all events, he led his forces from Dettingen and made a fierce assault upon the English army. Thus he threw away all the advantage of position for which Noailles had manœuvred, he attacked the entire force of the allies with a portion of the French army, he encountered superior numbers better placed and better disciplined. The English infantry, said Noailles, stood like a wall of iron, and their fire was incomparably superior to that of the

French.[1] The forces under Gramont were routed, and their defeat left the way open for the English advance. At sunset the battle ceased, the English slept on the field, and the next day they proceeded without further molestation to Hanau. The losses were about three thousand on each side.[2]

George II. was present at Dettingen with his army, and Frederick, in his memoirs, says that he stood during all the battle in front of his Hanoverian battalion, right foot forward, sword in hand and arm extended, in the attitude of a fencing-master.[3]

Frederick's memoirs are often as untrustworthy as they are entertaining, and in fact George seems to have acquitted himself as a good and valorous soldier at Dettingen. But he was content with his laurels, and felt no desire to renew the experience; the English commander, Lord Stair, resigned in disgust, and the English and Hanoverian troops were on bad terms. The English charged their Hanoverian allies with cowardice, and said that they halted as soon as they came in sight of the battle, refusing to share the danger and the glory of the day; as a result of such bickerings and indecision the Pragmatic Army, as it was called, accomplished nothing more during the year. The Austrians under Prince Charles made some endeavors to invade Alsace, but these were easily foiled, and the material results of the victory of Dettingen were small.

The moral results were of more importance, for Maria Theresa and her allies became still more confi-

[1] Lettre particulière au roi, June 29, 1743.

[2] See report of Noailles to Argenson, June 26; to king, June 28; Report of Stair, Dispatch of Carteret, etc.

[3] *Mém. de Fréd.*, i. 101.

dent of their ability to inflict a condign punishment on their chief enemy, and all was exultation at Vienna. The army of the king of England, wrote Stair, would now burst upon France like a thunderbolt. Among the French, on the other hand, this last disaster increased the discouragement which had long prevailed.[1] The resources of the country were not exhausted, said a minister, but the soldiers were ill disciplined, the officers were inefficient, and there was neither unity nor vigor in the administration.[2] The king himself possessed no power of heroic resistance; he bore little resemblance to his cousin of Prussia. "We must have peace," he wrote; "the best we can make." "We must not make a disgraceful treaty," he says again, "unless we are constrained by too great force."[3] Apparently Louis thought the forces against him were now overpowering, for he was willing to cede Lorraine as a condition of peace.[4]

Such timid counsels were soon abandoned, and the king was incited to play a manly part, which won for him an outburst of loyalty among his subjects as fervent as it was brief. Among the counselors to whom he listened with attention was Marshal Noailles, who had served under Louis XIV., had helped to extricate the finances from confusion under the regent, and had always shown himself a man of patriotism

[1] "La desolazione della corte passo à involgere in lagrime ed in angoscie questa numerosissima citta," says the Venetian ambassador, July 8, 1743.

[2] Tencin to king, July 13, 1743.

[3] Louis to Noailles, July 5 and 13, 1743.

[4] Tencin to king, July 13, 1743 ; to Richelieu, July 31. The Venetian ambassador, usually well informed, says the council was in favor of ceding Lorraine, but Louis would not consent. *Dis. Ven.*, 234, 355.

and fair judgment. The marshal was a worshiper at the shrine of Louis XIV., and he constantly repeated the wisdom of the great monarch for the edification of his descendant. "In case of war, be yourself at the head of your armies," the old king had said to his grandson, the king of Spain, and no sooner had Fleury died than Noailles found occasion to send this and other apothegms of Louis XIV. for the instruction of the king of France.[1] Such a suggestion was eminently judicious. The French were a warlike nation; when their king accompanied his armies to the field, he always excited the ardor of his soldiers and the admiration of his people; it was among the traditions of the monarchy that the sovereign should share the perils and the glory of warfare; few French kings had not been seen at the head of their own armies.

Louis XV. inherited the military tastes of his ancestors, and such an appeal found a ready response. "I have a strong desire," he wrote Noailles, "to familiarize myself with the trade in which my forefathers have been proficient."[2] "I cannot look on," he writes again, "while our cities are captured and our frontiers ravaged."[3]

The king's desire to share the fortunes of his army was fostered, even if it was not suggested, by Mme. de Châteauroux. If the new favorite was greedy and ambitious, her ambition was not of an ignoble type; she dreamed of rousing her lover from his sluggish indifference, of showing herself a new Agnes Sorel, of justifying her place in the king's affections by

[1] See Correspondence Louis XV. with Noailles.
[2] Louis to Noailles, July 24, 1743.
[3] *Ib.*, August 16.

turning him from a fainéant ruler into a hero. A common desire to make a warrior of the king created a temporary alliance between the exemplary nephew of Mme. de Maintenon and the beautiful duchess who now ruled at Versailles; the old marshal encouraged Louis's warlike ardor with the same zeal as the young mistress. "I recognize the blood and the sentiments of Louis XIV. and of Henry IV.," wrote the marshal. "Your kingdom is purely a military one; the love of arms has always distinguished the nation. Your majesty would be the first and the only one of his race who had never appeared at the head of his armies."[1] "All that contributes to his glory and raises him above other kings will be agreeable to me," wrote the mistress.[2] It was decided that in the following year Louis should take the field in person.

This generous resolution was embarrassed by the fatal weaknesses of Louis's character, — his love of pleasure, his unwillingness to sacrifice his amusement at the call of public duty. Louis was ready to go to the field, and his mistress encouraged him in this resolution, but the king wished her to be of the party, and the duchess was most anxious that she should be.[3] So timid was the king's character that he did not venture to decide on taking such a step. The project was suggested to Noailles, but the austere marshal discouraged it, alleging, as an excuse, the large expense that was incurred when ladies formed part of the royal retinue.

This objection was not of great force. "The king

[1] Noailles to king, August 6, 1743.

[2] September 3, 1743.

[3] Mme. de la Tournelle to Noailles, September 3, 1743; letter of Noailles, September 11, etc.

has his master of ceremonies, his chamberlain, his cooks, and his scullions," wrote a courtier when Louis had departed; "nothing is left behind but the mistress."[1] One more follower would not have imposed a large additional burden on the royal budget, but there were more substantial reasons for not parading the king's weaknesses before the army and all Europe. Louis was little pleased by this decision, though he did not venture to overrule it; he submitted to Noailles's judgment, but he owed him a grudge for it. The marshal had enjoyed so large a share of the monarch's confidence that he was regarded as a probable successor to Fleury's power, but his star declined from the time he interfered with his master's pleasures; if not actually disgraced, he ceased to receive any marks of special favor.

It was not until the spring of 1744 that Louis took the field, and in the mean time new combinations somewhat changed the aspect of affairs. The attempt to despoil María Theresa of her inheritance had involved Italy as well as Germany in hostilities. Upon the death of Charles VI., Philip V. advanced his claims to the succession of the Hapsburgs as the heir of Charles II. of Spain. Spain had guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction, but this guarantee affected her conduct as little as that of other nations. The position now taken could not, however, be regarded as serious; any theory which made Philip V. an heir of Charles VI. would have made Louis XV. a still nearer heir. But if Philip's pretensions to the entire heritage were slight, he hoped by means of them to get some portion of the plunder in which most of Europe was preparing to share.

[1] *Journal d'Argenson*, May 3, 1744.

In November, 1741, a Spanish army landed in Italy with the purpose of obtaining for the sons of the Spanish queen all that could be wrested from the inheritance of Maria Theresa. Elizabeth's ambition for her children secured, however, an ally for her adversary. The king of Sardinia was anxious to have his part in the spoils which the death of Charles VI. exposed to the greed of Europe, but he was equally anxious to keep Bourbon princes out of Italy. While expressly reserving his own right to lay claim to Milan, he now agreed to assist Austria against the Spanish, and as a result the Spanish army made little progress. The king of the Two Sicilies desired to interfere in behalf of his family, but an English fleet sailed to Naples and threatened to bombard the city unless the king remained neutral; under this vigorous pressure he withdrew his forces and left his kinsmen to fight their own battles. This they were not able to do with any success; the Spanish general was timid and inert, and in the only engagement of importance between him and the Austrians the latter had the best of it.

The French now came to the assistance of their Spanish kinsfolk, and the arrival of their army in Italy in 1743 changed the prospects of the combatants. Charles Emmanuel was king of Sardinia, and the French tried to obtain his aid; but that wily prince observed the judicious policy of the House of Savoy, he negotiated with both sides in search of the most favorable terms.[1] The assistance of the Piedmontese army, considerable in number and commanded

[1] The court of Turin was justly regarded among diplomats as "la plus fine cour de toute l'Europe." Instruction fur dem Grafen Richecourt, 1744.

with ability, was enough to secure the preponderance in Italy of the cause which Charles espoused, and the French would gladly have enlisted him in their interests by agreeing to give him all that should be won of Austria's Italian possessions. They were hampered, however, by their alliance with Spain, for while Charles Emmanuel wished the duchy of Milan for himself, the queen of Spain was unwilling that he should have it; she had begun the war to obtain Italian principalities for her own children, and she insisted that to this end the French must devote their entire energies. If Elizabeth would not agree to yield territories which she coveted, Maria Theresa, with better reason, was no more inclined to cede territories that were actually in her possession. It is doubtful if Charles had any real thoughts of entering a coalition, the object of which was to establish another son of the Spanish queen as an Italian prince, but the possibility of such an alliance was used to advantage in extorting favorable terms from Maria Theresa.[1] In these efforts Charles had the hearty coöperation of the English, and their activity in his behalf was little relished by Maria Theresa. It was with indignation that the queen listened to demands that she should cede an important piece of her Italian possessions to her dangerous neighbor of Sardinia. "If I am to be robbed," said the unhappy queen, "it may as well be by my enemies as by my friends. I had better make terms with my opponents than pay what is demanded by my defenders."

These negotiations continued for some time, but

[1] Sinzendorff said, wrote Capello, "Qualunque sia il maneggio della Sardegna con la Francia, egli non sa temere che unisca le sue truppe alle conquiste de Spagnuoli."

Charles Emmanuel was not a man to be trifled with indefinitely. He finally agreed on the conditions of a treaty with France, and the English were informed that it would be signed forthwith unless his demands were acceded to without more delay. "My situation is peculiar," he remarked to the French ambassador with affable effrontery. "If my courier arrives in time, I am the ally of England; if not, I am on your side."[1] The pressure which the English brought upon Maria Theresa at last overcame her stubbornness, and in September, 1743, the treaty of Worms was signed. By it Charles Emmanuel obtained from Austria the promise of Piacenza, Pavia, and extensive territories by the Po, in return for his promised aid, and his lot was cast with the enemies of France. Maria Theresa had no love for her new ally, and she bore a lasting grudge against the English for the zeal they displayed in obtaining concessions for him.[2] It must be admitted that she received hard treatment. In return for the sacrifices she made to pacify Prussia and Sardinia, her allies bound themselves to vigorous measures for the expulsion of the Bourbon princes from Italy, that the queen might have Naples as some compensation for her losses.[3] No sooner was the treaty signed than the Austrians prepared to invade the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, but neither her English nor her Piedmontese allies showed any inclination to coöperate. This was not the fitting time, they said, in reply to the protestations of her gen-

[1] *Correspondance de Turin*, 1743, *Aff. Etr.*

[2] See among other proofs of this her conversation with Robinson reported by him, May 1, 1748, and her correspondence with Wasner and Kaunitz in 1743.

[3] Second secret article, treaty of Worms.

erals, and the fitting time for their coöperation never came. Charles Emmanuel was paid to drive the Bourbons out of Italy; he kept the reward, and did not perform the work.

Louis XV.'s zeal in behalf of Spain was increased when he found that the king of Sardinia had declined his overtures. It was just at that time that Louis took a more active part in the administration than ever before or after: Fleury had lately died; Mme. de Châteauroux incited her lover to prove himself a king, to command in the field and control in the cabinet. He promptly assured Philip that the French army would join that of Spain and punish the perfidy of the king of Sardinia, and he kept his word.[1] In October, 1743, a treaty between France and Spain was signed at Fontainebleau which was the second of the series of family compacts. The treaty of 1733 had been framed under the guidance of Chauvelin, a diplomat of experience; the second was largely the handiwork of the king himself, and it assumed obligations far more serious. Their full accomplishment was impossible, and even the attempt at performance imposed serious and disastrous burdens upon France. But the king was anxious to advance the interests of his family, and Fleury was no longer present to insist that France should not be sacrificed to the demands of Spain. "I have the establishment of Don Philip as much at heart as your majesty," Louis wrote his uncle, and he was ready to concede whatever was asked. "This alliance being according to my heart," he wrote again, "I have consented with pleasure to whatever the prince of Campo Florido has proposed."

[1] Louis to Philip, September 20, 1743, *Aff. Etr.* "Pour tirer vengeance d'une aussi noire perfidie."

"You will see," said the minister for foreign affairs, writing to the French ambassador at Madrid, "that it is all for the advantage of Spain, but his majesty makes no distinction between the interests of the king of Spain and his own."[1]

The treaty of Fontainebleau, like that of Escurial which had been so soon violated, was declared to be an eternal family compact, which should bind more closely the ties of blood, and assure the splendor of two monarchies. It contained no stipulation of any sort for France, except that Spain should be her ally, but the provisions made for the Spanish infante were all that even his mother could demand. Her oldest son Carlos was now king of the Sicilies, and it was the second son, Don Philip, for whom provision was made. Don Philip had a double claim upon the affection of Louis XV.: he was his cousin, and by his recent marriage he had become the king's son-in-law. Louis was fond of his children, and he had now to provide for his daughter as well as for a prince of the Bourbon family.

By the treaty of Fontainebleau it was agreed that Don Philip should become the ruler of Parma, Piacenza, and of the duchy of Milan; he would, if it had been carried into effect, have been the most powerful prince in Italy, and to obtain for him these great possessions was declared in the treaty itself to be the chief object for which it was made. In addition to this, Gibraltar was to be conquered from England, the English colony of Georgia was to be destroyed, as injurious to the Spanish possessions in Florida, and the French bound themselves to make no peace until all these objects had been fully accom-

[1] Amelot to Rennes, October 26, 1743.

plished.[1] The treaty of Fontainebleau shared the fate of all the family compacts, — it was never executed; but the efforts made to obtain even a part of all that France had promised compelled her to continue an unprofitable struggle for years, and to sacrifice the advantages she might have gained in the war of the Austrian Succession.

However improvidently the obligation had been incurred, it came into the hands of a rigorous creditor, who raised loud cries of perfidy and abandonment if ever she saw the slightest abatement in the efforts to obtain its entire execution. The years which had passed since the war of the Polish Succession had not weakened Elizabeth's hold on the reins of Spanish government, nor did Philip's intellect become more vigorous as he approached the end of his life. One spirit ruled in Spain, and it was that of the queen.[2] The interviews between the French ambassadors and the Bourbon king seem like scenes of comedy. None were held at which the queen was not present, and the part taken by her husband was a humble one. She poured out her views with an impetuosity that allowed of no interruption, but when she paused a moment for breath the king would sometimes inter-

[1] This treaty, like the "pacte de famille" of 1733, was kept secret. It is found in *Cor. d'Espagne*, 474, 375–381, with an additional article, pp. 406, 433. The treaty allowed France to recover some unimportant towns ceded by the Peace of Utrecht. "Le fruit passager de la colère et de la partialité," is the description of the treaty by a French minister two years later. *Cor. d'Esp.*, 488, 203. Its engagements, he adds, were ruinous and without advantage to France, and the same thing could be said of the three family compacts between the sovereigns of the two countries.

[2] Vauréal to Argenson, October 19, 1744.

ject, "That is so; that is certainly true;" occasionally, after first carefully inspecting the face of his spouse to see if her countenance indicated approval, he ventured a suggestion of his own, which she would then expound more at length.[1]

The bishop, who for many years represented France at the court of Madrid, has drawn a picture of this autocrat in no flattering terms. Vain without dignity, avaricious without economy, and violent without courage, she had neither wit, nor judgment, nor grace; even her virtue, of which she made such constant boast, the critic said, had never been put to the test of temptation.[2] The portrait was drawn by an unfriendly hand, but it is certain that Elizabeth's character was harsh and violent, and it is equally certain that she bore no love for France. In this, if in nothing else, she shared the feelings of her subjects. Forty years of the rule of a Bourbon prince had not made the Spaniards love France: it was impossible that a Spaniard should truly like the French, their minister wrote despondently; from the highest to the lowest, they learned to hate the French as they learned to love a bull fight.[3]

These national antipathies were little considered by those who thought to make Spain the faithful ally of France by giving her a Bourbon king, but they made futile the schemes of statesmen. In no people was the feeling of nationality stronger than among the Spanish: if a Bourbon ruler would become a Spaniard, he could gain the affection of his subjects, but they resented the presence of French officials, the

[1] Rennes to Amelot, September, 1743, *et pas.*
[2] Vauréal to Argenson, July 26, 1746.
[3] *Ib.*, August 26, 1746.

existence of French customs, or the influence of French politics. It must be said that after the death of Louis XIV. they had little cause to complain of Philip V. in this regard.

When the treaty of Fontainebleau was signed, Charles VII. was still alive, and the French were engaged in the effort to keep on the imperial throne the monarch whom they had placed there. But in 1745, Charles ended his melancholy career of defeat and disappointment, and it was certain that the throne of the Cæsars would again become the patrimony of the House of Austria. As the French sought no conquests for themselves, they had then nothing left to fight for except the possessions in Italy desired for Don Philip. It required years of obstinate conflict to obtain them. Maria Theresa was stubborn in the defense of her possessions, she was ambitious, and she was pious; it was revolting to her pride that the power of Austria should be lessened during her reign; she believed that she was the lawful ruler of provinces and principalities of which unscrupulous enemies were seeking to despoil her, and she had implicit confidence that the God of battles would at last protect her rights against the unjust practices of wicked men.

"Our zeal for the welfare of Spain," wrote the French secretary for foreign affairs, ere the long war had been brought to an end, "has extended even to the sacrifice of our own interests." "If we were not charged with obtaining a principality for Don Philip," he writes again, plaintively, after the victories of Maurice de Saxe, "we might keep our conquests in Flanders for ourselves."[1] It was not strange that he

[1] Argenson to Vauréal, July 13, 1745; to Rennes, June 4, 1746, *Aff. Etr., Esp.*, 457, 488.

wished some means might be devised to induce the Spanish to abandon the French alliance, and said that posterity would find it hard to decide whether the effort to destroy Spain had cost France as much as the effort to protect her.[1]

[1] Argenson to Vauréal, 1745, *pas.*; to Rennes, October 16, 1746, *Aff. Etr., Esp.*

CHAPTER VII.

RENEWAL OF THE WAR BY FREDERICK.

The prosperity of the arms of Maria Theresa aroused an old enemy, and one more dangerous than the decrepit king of Spain. When Frederick obtained the cession of Silesia by the treaty of Breslau in 1742, he promised to take no further part in the war against Austria. That treaty had been scrupulously observed by the Austrian court, but Frederick had little respect for treaties himself, and little confidence in the fidelity of others to their obligations; he believed that if Maria Theresa had the power she would wrest Silesia from him, and in this belief he was undoubtedly right. The queen of Hungary had agreed to the peace of Breslau because the English intimated that at some future day she might get back her stolen property; she would certainly have felt that in retaking Silesia she was righting the wrong, punishing an evil-doer, and obtaining for that province the blessing of a lawful ruler and the ascendency of the true faith.

The news of the battle of Dettingen aroused Frederick from the tranquil enjoyment with which he had watched his former allies and enemies exhausting each other's resources. "I am annoyed at the news which I have received from Hanover," he writes to Podewils. "You will see the account of the battle which my uncle — may the devil take him — has won from the French." [1] His fears were at once excited for Silesia.

[1] Frederick to Podewils, July 3, 1743.

"When peace is made," he adds in the same letter, "I fear they will want to pare off something from our conquests."

These apprehensions, which appear constantly in his correspondence, were increased when he discovered the terms of the treaty of Worms. By that instrument many other treaties were confirmed, but Frederick noticed the ominous omission of any reference to that of Breslau.[1] As he was no party to the negotiations at Worms, such an omission would not seem strange, but the king was by nature in the highest degree suspicious. In a private memorandum he balanced the reasons for believing that the Austrians and English were acting towards him in good or in bad faith, and he unhesitatingly decided that they were actuated by the most sinister purposes. "I should be deceiving myself," he wrote his minister, "to put any confidence in the honeyed words of the court of Vienna, or to believe that they have any good

[1] *Politische Correspondenz*, iii. 26, 69, *et pas.* The guarantee is in the second article of the treaty, and secures to the three nations joining in it their possessions as established by various other treaties. It would have been as foreign to the matter in hand to guarantee Silesia to Prussia as Alsace to France, but Frederick was alert in finding justification for a policy to which he was inclined. In truth, there was no ground for his complaints. A secret article recited the treaty of Breslau and the English guarantee of it, and this was among the reasons for England's agreement to obtain for Maria Theresa, if possible, some compensation for the losses she had sustained. The validity of the treaty of Breslau, and its guarantee by England, was therefore recognized. It is possible Frederick did not know of this secret article, though he was usually well informed, but it is not probable that anything contained in or omitted from the treaty of Worms affected his conduct. He decided that to recommence hostilities would be to his advantage, and he gave such reasons for his determination as he saw fit.

intentions toward me. . . . They never pardon when they believe that they have been wronged." [1]

Frederick bore no love to France, but it was not for his interest that the humiliation of that country should increase the power of Maria Theresa. In the latter part of 1743, his representatives at Versailles intimated that if proper inducements could be offered their master he might be induced to take a hand again in the contest against Austria. Frederick could claim no violation of the treaty of Breslau, but there was little trouble in finding a pretext for war. Immediately after the battle of Dettingen he wrote Podewils, "Next year, when our flutes are tuned, the emperor must solicit me to send a contingent for the succor of the empire. All will be done in his name." [2]

Not only did Frederick desire a pretext, but he did not wish to recommence war without some hope of gain. He wrote his representative at Paris to intimate that thus far the inducements of personal advantage offered his master had not been sufficiently great to induce him to undertake new enterprises, "but you will touch on this very delicately," said Frederick. He was naturally apprehensive of the rancor that might remain from his desertion of the common cause two years before. "Will the king ever forgive me for making a separate peace?" he asked. The French had no wish to discourage a powerful ally by criticising his past conduct. "A great state," said their minister at Berlin, "does not know the feeling of vengeance; it considers only its own interest." Thus encouraged, the Count of Rothenburg labored with those most closely associated with the king of France

[1] Letter of October 26, 1743.

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, ii. 409.

to urge the expediency of a fresh treaty with Prussia, and a renewed invasion of Germany. Disregarding the minister of foreign affairs, Rothenburg discussed these matters with Richelieu and Tencin, and he chatted over the political situation at little suppers with the king and Mme. de Châteauroux.[1] Maria Theresa has long been reviled by historians for a letter which she was supposed to have written to Mme. de Pompadour a few years later in order to enlist her in favor of an Austrian alliance against the king of Prussia. "Though the haughtiest of princesses," says Macaulay, she "condescended to flatter the low-born and low-minded concubine." Later research has shown that no such letter was written, but if it had been, Maria Theresa might have pleaded that many sovereigns had sought to avail themselves of the influence of the mistress of a king, and foremost among them Frederick the Great. Mme. de Châteauroux's warlike ambition for her lover was known, and Frederick was sagacious enough to realize how valuable would be her influence. Not only did his envoy discuss with her the projects for an alliance and the plans for campaigns, but Frederick honored her with a letter by his own hand. "I am flattered," he wrote, "that I owe to you in part the inclination of the king of France to unite again the bonds of an eternal alliance between us. The esteem which I have always felt for you is mingled with my sentiments of gratitude. It is unfortunate that Prussia cannot know what it owes you, but this sentiment will remain profoundly impressed on my heart. Always your affectionate friend, Frederick."[2]

[1] Letters cited in Droysen, ii. 269.

[2] Frederick to Mme. de Châteauroux, May 12, 1744.

The negotiations in which the mistress of Louis XV. earned the gratitude of Frederick the Great resulted in three treaties, and by one of them various of the German states, together with France, agreed to unite for the pacification of Germany and the restoration of Bavaria to the emperor.

It was in behalf of the oppressed Charles VII. that the Prussian king now professed to take up arms, but Frederick's hard common sense never allowed him to waste his money or the lives of his soldiers in behalf of any one except himself. The affronts offered by Maria Theresa to the head of the empire seemed sacrilegious to Charles, but they left Frederick calm; the real incentive for his conduct was found in a secret treaty with France. By this Frederick was to conquer Bohemia, and as a reward for his services he was to receive the portion of Silesia which had not yet been ceded him and a considerable slice from Bohemia. These concessions were ratified by the emperor, though very reluctantly. Unless Frederick conquered Bohemia for him he had as little chance of reigning at Prague as at Vienna, but his soul was filled with illusions, and only with great pains could he be brought to relinquish his claim on any part of the kingdom as the price of getting the rest of it.[1] By this treaty the French agreed to invade Germany and make no peace until Frederick's gains were assured. With the growth of a national German sentiment, a sovereign who summoned French armies to violate the German soil would be deemed a traitor to the Fatherland, but Frederick did not share this feeling; he was a Prussian, and if he could increase the power of his own kingdom, he was indifferent whether his end was

[1] *Tagebuch*, 127.

obtained by German armies invading France or French armies invading Germany.[1]

It was not until June, 1744, that these treaties were signed.[2] Before that the nations which had long been fighting at last declared war. Up to this time France had taken part in the hostilities as the ally of the emperor, and England as the ally of Maria Theresa. While French, English, and Austrian soldiers were actively engaged in killing one another, their countries professed to be at peace. Now that Charles had declared himself a neutral, three great nations were engaged in a bitter conflict, while nominally they had nothing to fight about. This farce was at last ended. In the spring of 1744, France declared war upon England and Austria, and they issued counter-proclamations, by which each nation exposed the wickedness of the other. This exchange of wordy hostilities did no one any harm, but the French took a step that might have had more practical effect when they planned an invasion of England.

It would be curious to know the number of times that such an invasion has been contemplated, but since the days of William the Conqueror all such schemes have come to naught; it is not strange that an undertaking which Napoleon was obliged to abandon was not carried into successful execution by Louis XV.

It was a condition of the treaty of Utrecht that the

[1] Frederick's letters are full of reproaches against his French allies, because they did not manifest sufficient vigor in the invasion of German soil. *Pol. Cor.*, iii. 284, 294; iv. 60 *et pas.*

[2] The union of Frankfort was signed in May. Two other treaties were made, one between Prussia, France, and the emperor, and one between France and Prussia.

Pretender should be expelled from France. The enmity of George I. chased him from Lorraine and from Avignon, and in 1717 James Stuart at last found a peaceful refuge in Rome. There he lived for many years, giving much of his time to prayer, impressing those who saw him with the courteous dignity of his manners, but disclosing his character in his face, which was, says an observer, both sad and silly. The wisest course for France to have pursued with the Stuarts would have been to let them alone, but such had not been her policy in the past. No experience of the futility of Jacobite plots discouraged those who hoped to see again Catholic sovereigns on the English throne, and the cause of the Stuarts had now an influential advocate in Cardinal Tencin, who owed his promotion to the influence of the Pretender; the idea of diverting the attention of the English from a Continental war to the defense of their own country was suggested by him, and was adopted by the French government. James Stuart himself was weary of adventure, but his son, Charles Edward, was eager to respond to the suggestion that he should accompany an expedition having for its object the restoration of his family to the throne. On January 9, 1744, he left Rome. Disguised as a courier, and accompanied by only one attendant, he made the long journey in hot haste and reached Paris in eleven days.[1] He was not received by the French king, but he went to Gravelines and there remained in concealment. These efforts at secrecy were of no avail; if the hiding-place of the prince was concealed, it was the only thing about the proposed expedition that was

[1] An account of Charles Edward's departure from Rome is found in an appendix to Stanhope's *History of England*.

not known to England and all Europe, and the project had the effect of exciting the English to greater enthusiasm for the war. The Parliament voted ten million pounds for supplies; the Habeas Corpus act was suspended; the English rallied to the defense of their king against foreign invasion, and disliked the French a little more than before.

While such were the effects produced in England by this project, it was equally injurious to French interests in Germany. Chavigny was at Frankfort, trying to form an alliance with the princes of the empire, and furnished with money with which to purchase the aid of these mercenaries; but the news of the contemplated invasion discouraged Protestant states which, though inclined to espouse the French cause, had no desire for a Catholic restoration in England.[1]

The year before, the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel had sold six thousand of his subjects for the use of the English; he was now ready to make a similar bargain with the French, but his son had married an English princess, and he would not assist in expelling the House of Hanover from England. "Drive away this phantom of a Pretender," wrote Chavigny; "I have lost all confidence in these Jacobites, if I ever had any. They are good for nothing but to ruin themselves and those who act with them."[2]

These remonstrances were not heeded. Fifteen thousand men gathered at Dunkirk, and boats for transport were collected from every port. The command of the expedition was given to Maurice de Saxe, and he was bidden to disembark his troops in "the river of London," by which was meant the

[1] *Cor. de Bavière*, January 20, 1744.

[2] *Ib.*, March, 1744.

Thames. "As soon as they land," said the confident instructions, "a revolution will break out, and success will be certain."[1] Maurice was directed to advance with his army as in a friendly country, and was assured that the supplies furnished by the affectionate subjects of King James would be all that his troops required. Every one was charmed with this great project, wrote the Paris chronicler, and the superstitious derived much comfort from a prophecy of Nostradamus, which declared that in this year London would tremble.[2] The fortune of the Stuarts attended the expedition, and there was no opportunity to see whether the French ministers were better informed as to English sentiment than they were as to the names of English rivers. On the 1st of March, when the troops began to embark, a furious tempest arose; Maurice tried in vain to set sail; some of the transports were lost, and the endeavor had to be postponed. On March 4 another attempt was made, and again it was prevented by a storm. "Evidently the winds are not Jacobite," wrote Maurice.[3] In the mean time, the English fleet under Admiral Norris had appeared in the Channel, and any chance of a successful landing on the English coast was destroyed. The expedition was postponed, and soon afterward it was finally abandoned. Charles Edward returned sadly to Paris, and in April Maurice, now Marshal Saxe, changed the unsubstantial hopes of victory in England for the realities of victory in the Low Countries.

In the spring of 1744, Louis carried out his design

[1] *Mém.*, February, 1744.

[2] Barbier, iii. 495.

[3] Cited in Taillandier, *Maurice de Saxe.*

of appearing in person at the head of his soldiers, and this step was accompanied by a resolve to carry on the war with new vigor; the entire force under arms was increased to three hundred thousand men; additional taxes were imposed, though even with them there was a deficiency of one hundred million francs a year. But an exhibition of activity on the part of the sovereign, an awakening from the torpid indifference in which his life had been spent, was so agreeable to the people that these demands for men and money were responded to with cheerfulness. At last we have a king, was the universal saying, and the nation was enthusiastic in his support. The plans of the campaign excited also the confidence of the troops; they were not to be sent on long and painful excursions to Bohemia or Bavaria; they were to carry on war where there was more chance of victory and less danger of starvation.

The forces which now entered the Netherlands were under the nominal command of Louis XV., and the monarch had for his counselors Marshals Noailles and Saxe. The French army was one hundred thousand strong, while the allies were not able to muster over fifty thousand, and could offer no effective resistance. The English endeavored to obtain aid from Holland and from Prussia, but without success. The Dutch were indeed alarmed by the presence of French armies in their neighborhood, but the disastrous experiences of the war of the Spanish Succession had destroyed any taste for fighting among these peaceful burghers. In that war, Holland had borne a large share of the cost and had reaped little of the benefit; the contest had left her crippled and enfeebled, and since then England had far outstripped her former

rival for commercial supremacy. The Dutch now felt no inclination to risk an invasion by declaring war on France. They received pacific counsels from their ambassador in Paris who, from his taste for moral apothegms, was nicknamed the Plato of Holland. In an era of unscrupulous intrigue, the worthy Van Hoey excited amusement instead of veneration among his colleagues. His dispatches were intercepted, and it was with delight that a communication was read by skeptical and scheming politicians in which the worthy man wrote his government: "It is said that this advance of the French into the Low Countries causes great embarrassment to the republic. You have but to follow the lessons of prudence contained in verses 28 to 32 of the 14th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke. The course suggested in the last two verses can be followed by the republic with entire confidence." [1] When their high mightinesses turned to the verses in question they found this judicious advice: "Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace." They were so far influenced by these scriptural counsels that they decided not to declare war for the present, but contented themselves with sending an embassy to meet Louis, which received from him very scant satisfaction.

In another quarter, where the English applied for assistance, they were sure not to have Scripture quoted to them. By the treaty of Breslau, England had

[1] Van Hoey, April 24, 1744.

guaranteed Silesia to Frederick, and he in turn agreed to assist George II. against any attack upon his dominions. He was now asked to fulfill this agreement, but he met the request in his usual mocking vein. Assuming to believe that George was alarmed by the threatened expedition of the Pretender, he said that if England were invaded he would embark at once with an army of thirty thousand men, under his own command, and hasten to the aid of his royal uncle.[1] The English minister, little pleased by such badinage, replied that his master was quite able to defend himself at home; what he asked of Frederick was to perform his agreement and furnish troops to protect Hanover against the possibility of invasion. This was exactly what Frederick had no thought of doing. Hyndford was informed that the Prussian king's health required him to visit a watering-place, and this request could not be considered until his return.

Thus the French were left with a large superiority in numbers, and the presence of their king encouraged and stimulated the troops. Louis took kindly to his new duties and made himself popular in the army. He interested himself in the details of the service, visited the hospitals, and tasted the bread and soup of the soldiers; he appeared in the trenches and encouraged the men at their work.[2] The French made rapid progress: Menin surrendered after a siege of a few days, and Ypres and Furnes soon followed the example. But while the king was imitating Louis XIV. as a conqueror, he was desirous of following his ancestor's example in other respects. When the great

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, iii. 104 *et pas.*

[2] Broglie, *Frédéric II. et Louis XV.*, ii. 266–270.

monarch made his triumphal marches through the Low Countries, he was accompanied by all the splendor of his court; he took his mistresses with him and no one ventured to complain, not even his wife; they had not been regarded as unseemly features in the pomp that surrounded the "sun king." Louis XV. cared less for splendor than his ancestor, but he cared more for pleasure, nor was he the only one who desired that Mme. de Châteauroux should share his martial glory. Richelieu and Tencin were loath to leave the king with no one by him to counteract the influence of Noailles; the mistress herself feared the baleful effects of absence. "Does the king seem to think of me?" she wrote Richelieu. "Does he speak of me often? Is he impatient because he does not see me?"[1]

A step was decided upon which was sure to please the king, even though he did not venture to command it: Mme. de Châteauroux and her sister prepared to start for the scene of war. Even at this period some pretense of social decorum was required, but it was not difficult to find a lady of position to lend her countenance to such a project. The family of Conti was among the greatest in the kingdom, and the dowager princess of Conti was a personage of exalted rank. The princess now announced that she was to visit her son-in-law in the army; she selected for her attendants on the journey the Duchess of Châteauroux and her sister, and they soon joined the king.

A change, which is rarely recognized, had come over French feeling since the days of Louis XIV. When that monarch made his solemn entries in conquered cities, accompanied by his queen and his mistresses, it cannot be fairly said that such displays excited any

[1] Letters to Richelieu, June 3, 1744, cited by Broglie.

general disapprobation; some jested, a few lamented, but the great majority held that a king who equaled Solomon in wisdom and splendor could properly imitate that monarch in other respects. Though Louis XV. was a less imposing figure than his ancestor, he was at this time quite as much beloved by the French people, but the monarch was no longer regarded as a person so sacred that his conduct could not be discussed. While the age of Louis XV. is branded with special reprobation, it is doubtful if the standard of morality was any lower than a century before, and it is certain that criticism was much more severe. Even before the sisters left to rejoin the king, shrewd friends advised them to avert unfriendly criticism by giving liberally to charities, going regularly to mass, and conducting themselves with great modesty.[1] Such precautions would have been unnecessary fifty years before; they proved insufficient now. The arrival of Mme. de Châteauroux produced a most unfavorable effect on the army. There was not even a captain of cavalry, her friends complained, who did not assume to discuss her coming, and predict calamities for those who had advised it, and the letters from the army stimulated adverse criticism at Paris.[2] The measures taken in behalf of the duchess show how unscrupulously the mails were ransacked, not only for purposes of the government, but at the request of any one who had influence enough to use government appliances for his own ends; her friends told her that all letters coming from the army must be opened, and those containing any criticism on her conduct must be destroyed; she must have in the service only men of

[1] Letter of Cardinal Tencin, June 7, 1744.

[2] *Mém. de Tencin*, June 19, 1744.

whose fidelity she could be sure, and an unfortunate employee who dared not destroy a letter coming from so great a person as Marshal Saxe was condemned as faint hearted.[1]

Attention was diverted from such subjects by the news that France had been invaded by her enemies. Prince Charles of Lorraine, at the head of an Austrian army eighty thousand strong, advanced through Germany. The defense of the Rhine was intrusted to the decrepit Coligny, and the Austrians crossed the river practically without opposition. "At last we are in Alsace," Prince Charles wrote his brother; "you may expect to hear from me next at Paris." [2]

This put an end to the pleasant campaigning in Flanders. Louis declared that when the enemy were on French soil, it was for him in person to assist in repelling them; forty thousand were detached from the army in the Low Countries, and under the command of the king himself they started for Alsace. Extra pay stimulated the soldiers to the utmost exertion, and on August 4 they arrived at Metz.

While the king was hastening to repel Austrian invasion, Mme. de Châteauroux and her sister pursued him with equal celerity.

On the 6th there was a great supper at Metz, the king drank deeply, and on the following day, either as the result of exposure or of debauchery, he was attacked by a malignant fever. The care of the invalid was assumed by those who held the first place in his favor; the two sisters watched by his bedside,

[1] *Mém. de Tencin.* "I ask him to suppress all letters coming from the army which speak ill of the voyage of Mme. de Châteauroux," the cardinal says.

[2] Letters cited by Arneth, ii. 395, 549.

while Richelieu excluded from the room all whose services were not absolutely required. But the fever grew rapidly worse; alarming reports circulated as to Louis's condition. "The king is dying" was on every lip, "and no one has access to him except his mistress and her confidants." It was impossible that this should continue. The Count of Clermont and the Duke of Chartres sought to enter the king's chamber, while the Duke of Richelieu endeavored to keep them back. "Who is this valet who gives orders to the kinsmen of the king," cried the Duke of Chartres, as he forced his way into the room. The body of courtiers could no longer be excluded, but the king's condition grew none the better for their attendance. By the 11th it was thought that the end was near.

Amid the confusion and dismay excited by this sudden and terrible illness, the clamor grew stronger against the mistress who had outraged decency by following Louis on his campaign, and had drawn him into dissipation which would probably cost him his life. It was no longer the coterie of Richelieu and Châteauroux which was triumphant; the gallant duke and the beautiful duchess were overwhelmed in a torrent of popular indignation; those evil companions, it was said, must be removed, and the king be reconciled to the Great Judge before whom he was soon to appear.

The friends of virtue had small chance of gaining the upper hand with Louis while he was in health and strength, but now death seemed near, hell was perhaps not far distant, and the king was eager to do all that his ghostly counselors advised. His conscience was usually under the charge of his confessor, Father Pérusseau, a Jesuit, who had found it possible to keep

the king in the path of salvation and to remain on friendly terms with the king's mistress. But the grand almoner now came forward and said that by virtue of his office he alone was entitled to administer extreme unction to the dying man. The almoner was Bishop of Soissons, a grandson of the famous Marshal Berwick, and a man of austere character and rigid morals. He refused to administer the sacrament until Mme. de Châteauroux and her sister were dismissed. Such a demand met with no resistance from the terrified king, and Louis signed an order directing them to leave Metz forthwith. "Where shall they go?" he was asked. "Let them go to Paris," he replied; "let them go anywhere, if only it is far away." Such was the feeling against the fallen mistress that she dared not be seen in Metz; a friend lent his carriage to the sisters and, with the curtains closely drawn, they made their way by stealth from the town.[1]

The grand almoner now felt justified in administering the offices of the church to one whose penitence had been proved by his acts. Those who had the right to be in attendance on the king while he lived were also entitled to watch him when he was dying. Such a crowd of officers and courtiers filled the room while the extreme unction was administered, that we are told it looked like the parterre of the opera at a first representation.[2] The Bishop of Soissons was resolved to have the cause of virtue publicly vindicated in the presence of this audience. Turning to the assemblage of nobles and officers he said in a loud voice, "The king has instructed me to state to you that he repents of the scandal he has caused, and that

[1] So stated in a letter of Mme. de Châteauroux.

[2] *Rélation* cited by the Duc de Broglie.

he has no thought of choosing Mme. de Châteauroux as superintendent of the establishment of the dauphine."[1] "Nor of making her sister a lady in waiting," came in a weak voice from the bed, as Louis himself endeavored to complete the bishop's statement, — a protestation which strengthened suspicions that had long been entertained. A temporary gallery had connected the residence of the king with that occupied by Mme. de Châteauroux, and had given rise to evil jests among the public. Now that the duchess was gone, the gallery was harmless, but it was at once torn down, that the triumph of virtue might be manifest and complete.

The news of the king's illness soon reached Paris, and it excited an outburst of grief and of passionate affection for the monarch such as has never again been witnessed in France. The French were still deeply attached to their sovereigns; if Louis's early career had not aroused enthusiasm, they were ready to overlook its errors; if he had done nothing, it was because Cardinal Fleury had done all. Now he was at the head of their armies; he was attacked by a dangerous and perhaps a fatal illness when he was hastening to repel a hostile invasion. "He has died for us" was the universal cry among a people who were willing to forgive so much in their monarchs and to repay with an ardent affection any exhibition of courage or patriotic devotion. Tears were seen in every eye; the offices of the post were besieged by those asking for the news brought by the latest couriers; the churches were filled with people praying for the king's restora-

[1] This alluded to a rumor that this important position was soon to be bestowed on Mme. de Châteauroux as a further mark of the king's favor.

tion to health; at Notre Dame, services were held continuously during forty hours to propitiate the Divine mercy.[1]

Louis had sent word that his wife and son should come to Metz, but the royal vehicles were so cumbersome and the royal retinue so extensive, that it was only with much difficulty that they could be started.

The party were obliged to move in three detachments at intervals of six hours, while eighty horses were needed for each relay. Notwithstanding the delay caused by the requirements of court etiquette, the queen at last reached Metz. She found that the crisis had passed, and the king was on the road to recovery. The physicians had ordered frequent bleedings, and these, in connection with the fever, had brought Louis almost to the grave; at last, in despair, a quack was allowed to give him a pill, and at once he began to mend.

The grief which had been caused by the king's illness at Paris was followed by a corresponding outburst of joy when it was known that the danger was past. For days the celebrations continued: the houses were magnificently decorated, at night all the streets were ablaze with lights, never had such illuminations been seen, the streets of St. Denis, St. Martin, and St. Honoré became marvels of beauty, Te Deums were sung, fireworks blazed, on the Port Neuf wine was running free of cost, and bread and sausages were given away to the hungry.[2] A priest declared the king to be Louis the well-beloved, and this was caught up all over France; to Louis the great succeeded

[1] The best account of the feeling at Paris is found in the *Journal de Barbier*, t. iii.

[2] For all this see *Journal de Barbier*.

Louis the beloved.[1] The expression continued to be applied to the king by court poets and chaplains long after he had become an object of hatred and contempt to almost the whole French nation.

The joy of the people was shared by the queen. She found her husband alive and penitent, and asking pardon of her for his offenses; her rivals had been sent about their business amid the hootings of the populace; in the future, the king, whom a miracle had saved from the grave, would lead a praiseworthy and Christian life.

While such were the hopes of the friends of virtue, those who constituted what we may call the party of vice, with a more accurate knowledge of the king's character, felt sure that the only thing necessary for their final triumph was that Louis's life should be spared. The Duchess of Châteauroux and her sister had a melancholy journey back to Paris. Wherever they were recognized, they were greeted with invectives and coarse insults. At Bar le Duc they nearly encountered the cortége of the queen on the road for Metz; the duchess concealed herself in a retired house to escape the contumely and even the danger which might result from such a meeting. But her heart did not fail her, and she knew well the character of the man who had exposed her to insults and disgrace when he was afraid of dying, and who would be sure to pursue her again when his fears had passed away. "So long as the king is feeble," she wrote her adviser, the Duke of Richelieu, "he will continue devout, but when he is better I wager that I will run furiously in his head. I do not see that the future is all dark if the king recovers. If we escape from this, you will

[1] *Luynes*, ix. 117. The priest was the Abbé Josset.

agree that our star will carry us far." She had judged her royal lover rightly. As Louis grew stronger his piety grew weaker; he began to yearn again for the pleasures to which he was accustomed, and to look with unfriendly eyes on those who made such public proclamation of his future virtue. Even at the time, all had not approved of the zeal of the Bishop of Soissons in proclaiming Louis's repentance. "The conduct of the Bishop of Soissons is regarded as the most noble thing in the world," writes Barbier with his usual bourgeois good sense. "Already he is made Archbishop of Paris and cardinal. For myself, I regard this conduct as very indecent. For what serves all this ecclesiastical parade? It was enough if the king had a sincere repentance for what he had done."[1] Certainly, to justify this public and pompous announcement of a reformed life, one should have been sure that the future would verify it, and with a character like that of Louis XV. it was certain that the future would belie it.

The king soon tired of the queen's society, and he asked her with his habitual brusqueness when she intended to return to Versailles.[2] She recognized the symptoms of his ill will, and left the same night. The officious almoner discovered that he had not taken the road to royal favor. Neither archbishop nor cardinal was he to be. The wise Bishop of Rennes had surrendered his apartment at Versailles for the use of the mistress, and he enjoyed the sovereign's good will; the foolish Bishop of Soissons demanded her dismissal: he was now ordered to go to his diocese and stay there.

Inexperienced as Louis was in military affairs, he

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, August, 1744.

[2] *Mém. de Brancas*, 102.

could be of little service to veteran generals when well, yet his illness had a blighting influence on the French arms; the uncertainty as to the king's recovery and as to the changes in administration that might follow his death paralyzed the energies of the commanders of the army by the Rhine.

Fortunately for the French, Prince Charles, the Austrian leader, was not a dangerous opponent. He was an amiable man and a fair officer, and he was the brother-in-law of Maria Theresa. The queen displayed no especial sagacity in the choice of her generals; having entire confidence that the Lord would assure victory to her righteous cause, she was largely influenced by personal feelings in the selection of those who were to carry out the decrees of the Almighty. Earlier in the war she had been anxious to furnish her husband opportunities for military distinction, and when it was apparent that he would gather a very moderate crop of laurels on the battlefield, she wished his brother to have the glory of invading France. The invasion would have had more important results if it had been conducted by a different leader.

On July 3, the entire Austrian army triumphantly crossed the Rhine, with bands playing martial airs, but they made slow progress on the west bank, and it was soon evident that it would be some time before Prince Charles could send bulletins from Paris. He was afraid to venture far from the river, lest his retreat should be cut off, and any hopes of aid from the inhabitants of Lorraine, who had so lately been the subjects of his family, were soon dispelled. A year before, the Austrian General Mentzel had issued a proclamation, in which he bade the people of Alsace

and Lorraine to rise and shake off the unbearable burden of French tyranny, and threatened with fire and the sword those who refused to accept the blessings of German liberty and come to the aid of their lawful sovereigns. This proclamation met with no response. The inhabitants of those provinces showed no desire to change their nationality; they wished to be French and did not desire to cast in their lot with Germany, and the people of Lorraine now made no response when their former rulers asked for their support.

Though Prince Charles accomplished little on the left bank of the Rhine, he furnished an opportunity for action on Frederick's part. The Prussian king had signed a treaty of alliance with France in June, yet no one could say with certainty that he would actually decide to begin hostilities. His purposes changed rapidly, and if a different political position made it for his interest to remain tranquil, a treaty more or less would not affect his conduct. An invasion of France would not necessarily have disturbed him, but he did not desire to see Alsace and Lorraine added to the dominions of a queen who would always remain his bitterest enemy. Moreover, while the principal Austrian army was engaged beyond the Rhine, it was an excellent time for the invasion and perhaps the conquest of Bohemia; if the attempt was to be made at all, there could be no better opportunity. For a while certainly, Frederick could only encounter inferior forces, and if the French generals showed the vigor to which he constantly incited them, it might be long before Prince Charles would be in condition to oppose the Prussian army.

Frederick decided, therefore, that he would no

longer remain a tranquil observer of the war, and he had abundant pretexts for again beginning hostilities. On August 13, 1744, he issued a manifesto in which he declared that he took up arms solely to protect the emperor from Austrian oppression, and in fulfillment of the duties imposed on him as a faithful member of the empire, to preserve its liberties and the dignity of its chief. No personal interest, he added, was involved in the renewal of the war; for himself he asked nothing and wished nothing.[1] Proclamations of this nature rarely keep closely to the truth; by the treaties which had been made, the Prussian king had secured the promise of a large part of Bohemia as a reward for his services, and when the emperor grumbled at the price, the king threatened to put an end to the negotiations if his demands were not complied with.[2] Frederick cared little for the empire and less for the emperor; the hope of new acquisitions and the fear that continued success would encourage Maria Theresa to attempt the recovery of Silesia were the motives which led him to violate the treaty of Breslau.[3]

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, iii. 242–245.

[2] Beilage zu Wasners Bericht, *Tagebuch Karl's VII.*, 127.

[3] That Frederick did not violate the treaty of Breslau in the hope of further aggrandizement is confidently maintained by Droysen and Ranke. Carlyle thinks that his hero always acted right, no matter what he did, or what his motives were. Arneth, on the other hand, ii. 401, says: "Dass die wahren Beweggründe des Konigs zum Bruche des Breslauer Friedens nur in seinem Begierde nach neuer und ansehnlicher Gebietsvergrosserung zu suchen sind, daruber wird kein Unparteischer dem leisten Zweifel sich hingeben konnen." This would be the opinion of most of those who did not think that a man with the intellect of a Frederick must necessarily have the character of a St. Louis. It certainly seems hard to believe that the king

With his usual vigor he at once invaded Bohemia at the head of an army of eighty thousand men. This sudden attack was almost as complete a surprise to Maria Theresa as the first invasion of Silesia, and the indignation at Vienna was fierce. "He has neither faith, nor honor, nor religion," said the grand duke of his enemy; "we must crush this devil so he can never again be an object of fear. It seems that God is arranging for the punishment of him who is the cause of so many evils."

Frederick was little disturbed by such anathemas, and he made rapid progress in Bohemia. The Austrians had no army with which to oppose his advance. Early in September he was at Prague, and on the 16th, after a siege of six days, the city surrendered. For the second time in three years the citizens of that town were required to declare themselves subjects of Charles VII., king of Bohemia. The campaign had opened prosperously, but Frederick was now to encounter for the first time the inconstancy of fortune. He had hoped that it would be long before the Austrians were strong enough to embarrass his movements, and it was with infinite disgust he learned that the army of Prince Charles was hastening to the scene of action.

No sooner had Frederick invaded Bohemia than Maria Theresa felt constrained to postpone her visions of French conquest and recall Prince Charles for her

took up arms in his zeal for the empire, or for the cause of Charles VII., in view of his frequent communications to his confidential adviser, in which he stated his apprehensions as to his own position, and then added with perfect frankness that the emperor must furnish the pretext, and that all would be done in his name. *Pol. Cor.*, ii. 409 *et pas.*

own protection. Even before her orders reached him, the prince felt that if Prussia was again an enemy, his army was needed on German soil, and he decided to fall back. He did not find his retreat a difficult undertaking; he had crossed the Rhine without opposition, and he was allowed to recross it without loss or danger. This result could not be charged to any lack of attention on Frederick's part; he was profuse in his exhortations to harass the Austrians on their retreat, to oppose their crossing the Rhine, to delay in every way their return to Bohemia; he could not even send a note of congratulation to Louis without adding a prophecy that the king would now add to his other glorious achievements the destruction of Prince Charles's army.[1] If he anticipated such a result, he was doomed to a bitter disappointment. The army opposed to Charles was under the command of Noailles, and that respectable but not brilliant officer was not the man for bold and rapid movements; intent on repelling Prince Charles's advance into France, he probably viewed his retreat with too much satisfaction to be zealous in interrupting it. On August 23, the forces under Prince Charles began to recross the Rhine; they proceeded undisturbed; the entire army reached the right bank without loss, burned their boats, loaded the pontoons, and started tranquilly for Bohemia. It is quite probable that Noailles thought it wise to let Charles escape easily, — "to make a bridge of gold for the retreat," as he was charged with saying, — but he lost an opportunity to cripple the forces of Maria Theresa which did not again return. Frederick was enraged and with good

[1] Frederick to Louis, August 20, 1744; *Pol. Cor.*, iii. 220, 253, *et pas.*

reason. "In God's name," he wrote Noailles,[1] "I supplicate you to do what you can to put Seckendorff's army in condition to act with vigor in Bavaria;" but nothing was done, and Prince Charles pursued his peaceful march towards Bohemia. Noailles was not a vigorous leader, and it must be said, moreover, that the abuse and ridicule which Frederick always poured liberally on those with whom he acted, and which was sure to come promptly to their knowledge, did not render them any the more inclined to follow his suggestions. The Prussian king was entirely selfish in his zeal for greater activity on the part of the French armies, but his advice was judicious, and he had reason to complain of the inefficiency of his allies; an opportunity had been lost, he said, such as rarely occurred and might never return. "What can I expect from France?" he wrote Louis in his wrath, "or can I expect nothing at all?" and he poured out his rage at the imbecility of French generals and the apathy of French ministers.[2]

By September Prince Charles reached Bohemia, and the Austrians were now superior in numbers to the Prussians. Unlike the venerable generals who commanded the French armies, Frederick could never be charged with timidity or remissness, but his campaign in Bohemia was unfortunate and seems to have been ill advised. After the capture of Prague he marched south in the hope of pushing on to Vienna, but he was harassed by a hostile population; he had anticipated less resistance than he encountered, and when opposed by an army equal to his own he did not display the generalship of his later years. His

[1] Frederick to Noailles, September 16, 1744.

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, iii. 284, 294, *et pas.*

conduct was severely criticised by his adversaries. "God has blinded him," wrote Prince Charles to his brother; "his movements are those of a fool."[1] The Austrians, under the prudent leadership of Marshal Traun, followed closely, while persistently refusing a battle. Frederick had trouble in obtaining supplies, and his position soon became perilous. His embarrassments were increased by hearing that Saxony had declared against him, and had sent twenty thousand men to join the forces of Maria Theresa. "One should never ill treat an adversary by halves," said Frederick, and on another occasion he applied this maxim in his dealings with the Elector of Saxony. But now it was too late; Silesia was threatened, and Frederick retreated from Bohemia with all possible haste in order to protect his own possessions; as it was impossible to hold Prague, the Prussian garrison evacuated the city and made its way into Silesia, not without sustaining serious loss. "The devil took me into Bohemia," cried Frederick. Many years later, when his fame was secure, he wrote in his memoirs, "No general made more mistakes than the king in this campaign."[2]

It was the first time that Frederick had encountered any serious mishaps, and his pride was mortified; he had scoffed unmercifully at the mistakes and disasters of his allies, and to share in similar calamities was in a high degree distasteful. At the same time, the dangers in which his unfortunate campaign had involved him proved the difficulties of further con-

[1] Charles to the grand duke, October 6, 1744.

[2] *Mém. de ma vie*, ch. x. See *Cor. Pol.* for 1744, and *Rélation de ma campagne* sent to Louis. In this he said, "I made mistakes which caused the failure of the whole campaign," iv. 345.

quests, and decided him to make peace, if he could be assured of Silesia. Past experience showed that he would not delay in accepting satisfactory terms from any regard for his allies, and he at once asked the English to induce Maria Theresa to make peace with him. The French, on the other hand, continued to carry out their part under the treaty of alliance with much good faith and very little vigor, and no procedure could have been more injudicious in an ally of Frederick. After Prince Charles had crossed the Rhine and made his way undisturbed into Bohemia, the French laid siege to Freiburg. It was a fortress of importance, and the siege was carried on in the dilatory fashion of the campaigns of Louis XV.; in September the French, seventy thousand strong, encamped before the city, and not until November did the citadel surrender. Immediately after this the French went into winter quarters and Louis returned to Paris. He stayed with the soldiers until Freiburg surrendered, but he was glad to be done with campaigning for the present; he was somewhat weary of glory, and very weary of virtue.

No sooner had he returned to Versailles than every one began to speculate whether the favorite, who had been so ignominiously driven from Metz, would again resume her position with the king. Not only courtiers but foreign sovereigns watched with attention the attitude of the Most Christian King towards his former sultana. Frederick had expressed his regret at her disgrace, and the Prussian ambassador wrote that her return would be most beneficial to Prussian interests.[1]

[1] Chambrier to Frederick, November 6, 1744. Frederick to Schmettau, August, 1744: "Je suis faché de la disgrace de la duchesse de Châteauroux."

Louis had already manifested his annoyance at the promises of reformation which had been drawn from him in his weakness, and at the proclamation of a changed heart, which had been so publicly made in his name. But the episode of Metz could not be forgotten, and the king hesitated to show how promptly, when well, he returned to modes of life which he had piously abjured when ill. No one who knew his character could doubt of the final result; Mme. de Châteauroux had been outraged by the ignominy of her dismissal, and she now comforted herself with hopes of a speedy revenge upon her enemies. "The queen wishes to become a person of importance," she wrote Richelieu, "but this will not last long. I will have the health of a porter, so I can have time enough to punish my enemies, and punished they shall be, you may be sure of it." "If I return to favor, as I do not doubt I shall," she wrote again, discussing the Duke of Noailles, "how I will hate him; how I will persecute him. You need not talk; I will overthrow him for good. I will make them see of whom they have been making sport."[1] She did not have long to wait for her restoration to favor. The king arrived from the army on the 14th of November, and two weeks later it was officially announced that Mme. de Châteauroux and her sister would again take possession of their apartments at Versailles. "How they have treated us!" exclaimed the favorite to Louis when they met for the first time after her expulsion from Metz.[2]

In all this there was nothing very strange; Louis XV. was not the first man who promised to reform

[1] Letters of Châteauroux to Richelieu, cited by Broglie.

[2] *Mém. de Brancas*, 105.

when in fear of death, and thought better of the promise when he found himself restored to health; in the seventeenth century, not to speak of prior centuries, one could find in the history of French kings abundant instances of immorality quite as scandalous as anything in the relations of Louis XV. and Mme. de Châteauroux. What was novel about this affair was the indignation and the public comment which it excited. It was this freedom of criticism, this impatience of conduct and conditions which had long been viewed with tranquillity, that was new in the eighteenth century, and such feelings became more pronounced as the age advanced. Neither morals nor honesty were at any lower ebb at this period than often in the past, — in the latter part of the century there was unquestionable improvement; the condition of the people was not worse than it had been, it was better; the relics of feudal oppression were not more burdensome than they had been, they were less burdensome; taxation was no more grievous, legislation was more liberal, yet, in 1789, conditions which had been borne with resignation in the past produced a revolution that overthrew the whole political and social system. It is one of the symptoms of this change in public sentiment that in 1744 a storm of indignation was aroused by conduct against which a hundred years before no voice would have been raised. Not only would it have been hazardous to criticise the relapses of Louis XIV., such as his return to Mme. de Montespan after Bossuet's exhortations had led him to renounce her society, but such comments would have been deemed revolutionary, a sort of lese majesty; a judgment upon the moral conduct of the sovereign would have been regarded as beyond the jurisdiction of a subject.

It was not so in 1744. "This intelligence is revolting to the whole population of Paris," writes a chronicler. "The step is regarded as a terrible one. The Jansenists predict many calamities from it. The king, it is said, should not be less mindful of religion than a private man." [1] The chronicler of the court notes in similar terms the impression produced by the recall of the favorite. "Even Versailles," he says, "where usually people talk little on these subjects, has not been altogether free from such conversation." The discreet duke adds, indeed, "The most judicious keep silence." [2] This outcry of offended morality may not be regarded as very important; but it is significant because for the first time we find such open and unsparing criticism, not of the government, but of the king himself. Nothing could be more unimportant to posterity than whether a king had a mistress more or less, but when the public began to regard the sovereign, not as a superior being, to be loved and reverenced no matter what he did, but as a man to be judged and condemned, it marked a great change in public feeling. It was said that the market-women of Paris expressed their disapprobation of Louis's relapse from virtue by declaring that they would say no more paters for the king; it is certain that when his life was again in danger there was no repetition of the universal grief which had been excited by his illness at Metz.

Mme. de Châteauroux was not to enjoy the triumph over her enemies which she had so eagerly desired. On the day the king informed her that he regretted the indecency with which she had been treated at

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, November, 1744.
[2] *Mém. de Luynes*, vi. 166 *et pas.*

Metz and recalled her to his favor, she was attacked by a fever; she grew rapidly worse, and on the 8th of December death ended the adventurous career of the favorite at the age of twenty-seven. Louis shed a few tears; his tears always flowed easily, and were always soon dried. Even death did not lessen the public discontent; the duchess was buried without pomp; it was feared that the populace would not spare her coffin if the funeral were in the busy hours of the day; very early her remains were carried through deserted streets to their final resting-place.

Attention was soon diverted from the fate of the favorite to the death of a person of far more elevated station. When Frederick invaded Bohemia, the Emperor Charles VII. was filled with a desire to profit by this diversion and establish himself again in his much loved Munich. The Austrian troops were withdrawn for the defense of Bohemia, and this enabled Charles to enjoy a few hours of triumph at the close of his career. He proceeded exultantly to his capital. On the road he visited the Duke of Wurtemberg and received the honors which were dear to his heart. The duke descended from his carriage and kissed the emperor's hand. "I extended it," says Charles, "but without descending from my carriage." [1] Though the emperor could not always pay his butcher's bill, he never forgot his dignity. When he reached the palace all the family and followers of the duke came out to greet the illustrious guest, and with equal formality they attended his departure. On October 23, 1744, he made his solemn entry into Munich. The rule of his family had always been a kindly one, and through all his misfortunes Charles had been dear

[1] *Tagebuch Karl's VII.*, 137, 138.

to his people; the streets were filled with men and women weeping with joy, as, amid the ringing of bells and the firing of cannon, the emperor made his way to the palace of his ancestors. "My heart was full of the love I have for my faithful subjects," wrote Charles, whose heart was as good as his head was weak.[1] These hours of triumph were brief. Frederick was obliged to retreat from Bohemia, and the Austrians again entered Bavaria. The emperor appealed pathetically to Louis to protect his capital from his enemies. Belle Isle visited Munich, and the unfortunate emperor wept in his arms at the prospect of having again to undergo the bitterness of exile. But the French had advised him not to reoccupy Munich, and they were not inclined to send a powerful army far from France in the hope of repelling the Austrian advance. "I cannot neglect the security of my own frontiers," answered Louis; "while I understand the fondness of your majesty for your capital, yet the strongest desires must yield to the requirements of war and the demands of policy."[2] This refusal to come to his aid was the final blow to the ill-fated protégé of France; his health had long been infirm; disappointment and anxiety had shattered him mentally and physically; another term of exile, poverty, and mortification was more than he had the fortitude to encounter. On January 20, 1745, Charles VII. died in his forty-eighth year. He had been emperor for three years, and during almost all of that time he had been one of the most unhappy men in Europe.

The French could now have closed the disastrous war in which they were engaged with honor and per-

[1] *Tagebuch*, 140.

[2] Letter of Louis, January 3, 1745.

haps with some advantage, and except the aggrandizement of the Spanish infante there no longer seemed to be anything to fight about.[1] It was to wrest the imperial crown from the House of Austria that the war had been begun, but only a man bereft of intelligence would believe that this endeavor could again be made with success. It was impossible to obtain a majority in the college of electors for any candidate opposed by Austria. Maria Theresa was no longer unknown and helpless; her fame for vigor and constancy was established, her armies were numerous, her allies were active. Austria under her rule was quite as powerful as it had been under Charles VI. Even if votes could be obtained for any other candidate, it hardly seemed possible that a prince could be found insane enough to accept the office. The experience of Charles VII. showed the probable fate of him who should hold this dignity without having hereditary dominions as extensive as those of Austria to sustain himself in it. The minor German princes preferred their peaceful palaces, the delights of their Residenzen and Lustenhausen, to flying from city to city before Austrian armies; an imperial crown, the wearer of which would probably have to live in exile and subsist on charity, had few attractions.

Maria Theresa had long been filled with a passionate desire to see the crown of Charlemagne placed on the brow of her beloved husband. The campaigns of the last year had shown her that the conquest of French provinces would not be as easy a task as she had hoped; there is little doubt that if France had consented to the elevation of the grand duke to the imperial throne, Maria Theresa would have been

[1] Argenson to Rennes, July 1, 1746, *Aff. Etr. Esp.*

ready to make peace, and very possibly would have consented to some modification of the French frontier in Flanders. France was indeed allied with Prussia, with Bavaria, and with Spain, but neither good policy nor good faith required her to prosecute the war in their behalf. The young Elector of Bavaria soon obtained peace for himself, and was left in the tranquil possession of his electorate upon abandoning all claims on the imperial crown or the inheritance of Maria Theresa. With quick political foresight, Frederick no sooner heard of the death of Charles than he offered to make peace and support the grand duke for the empire, if he could be assured of Silesia and obtain some moderate advantages in addition. Only a quixotic loyalty demanded that a nation should sacrifice itself for an ally who was endeavoring to secure his own interests by abandoning the alliance. To Spain France was bound by an unwise treaty, one of the fruits of her unfortunate success in putting a Bourbon on the Spanish throne. But ten years before, in very similar circumstances, Fleury had decided that his first duty was to his own country; he had obtained advantages for France, instead of carrying on a costly war to satisfy the greed of the Spanish queen, and a wise and patriotic Frenchman would now have pursued a similar course.

Unfortunately, the men who had the destiny of France in their hands at this time were not wise; if they had imitated the example of their ally Frederick, and considered only the interests of their own land, the course of events for the next twenty years might have been changed. It was not often that Louis XV. exercised a decided influence in shaping French policy; on this occasion he did, and his usual

good judgment was biased by his personal desires and jealousies. The results of the last campaign had been satisfactory, and Louis was eager to take part in another; the seat of war would be in Flanders, where the French armies had often been successful, and where the king could himself share in the glory to be gained. He was influenced also by another and a less creditable feeling. As the male line of the House of Austria had failed, it was the former Duke of Lorraine, the husband of Maria Theresa, who was a candidate for the imperial throne. The prospect of his elevation was disagreeable to Louis XV., and offended a weak vanity from which he was not free. The Duke of Lorraine had been his neighbor and almost his subject; even regarded as an independent sovereign, the duke was a very unimportant personage compared with the king of France. When he visited the French court he was entitled to no greater honors than many French nobles; he paid homage for the duchy of Bar to the French king, and, humbly kneeling, swore fidelity to him as his feudal superior.[1] But if the duke were made emperor he would assume the position of greatest dignity in Europe; he would outrank the king of France in the society of sovereigns: it was the case of a poor neighbor suddenly rising to a superior social rank; the Duke of Lorraine as emperor seemed a parvenu, and Louis did not like parvenus.[2]

[1] The memoirs of St. Simon are full of the squabbles of the dukes of Lorraine and some of the French nobility, and the duke is never more eloquent than in denouncing what he calls the black artifices of the House of Lorraine to obtain special privileges and honors at the French court.

[2] Chambrier to Frederick, February 22, 1745. "Il y a dans le cœur du roi de France une jalousie et une haine telle que ces deux passions se fonts entir dans un supérieur pour un inférieur."

Another man had much to do in shaping the policy of the country at this crisis, and, actuated by the most patriotic motives, he succeeded in doing nothing that he should and everything that he should not have done. The character of the Marquis of Argenson possesses an unusual interest. He was a gentleman of good descent, though connected with parliamentary families rather than with the nobility of the sword. His father became famous by the ability he displayed as lieutenant of police under Louis XIV.; his brother, a man of readiness and good parts, was secretary of war under Louis XV. In the liberality of his views, in the justness of many of his observations, the marquis himself was unusual in his class and his age. In the last half of the century the aristocracy were often revolutionary in expression, if not at heart, but such sentiments found no utterance among the nobility fifty years earlier. Argenson was one of the first who felt the dim forebodings of different social conditions, who heard the distant murmurs of the Revolution.

His active mind devised schemes of political change which, if not always sound, were always ingenious; he planned the deliverance of Italy from the rule of foreigners at an era when the dreams of mediæval Guelfs had been forgotten and the modern visions of a united Italy had not come into existence. At a time when America was regarded by most Continental politicians as not very much more important than Madagascar, and when no one dreamed that the struggling colonies of North America would form an independent republic, Argenson's prophetic eye saw the possibilities of a marvelous development in population and wealth; the day would come, he declared, when the traveler would start to visit some populous and civil-

ized city in California as then one took the coach to Meaux.[1] He sketched a form of government for his own country, in which all privileges and immunities should be swept away, where judicial offices should cease to be sold, and local interests should be administered by those who were concerned. Amid the corruption and selfishness of the age of Louis XV. Argenson wrote, "There is a trade by which one could gain prodigiously, and that is to play the part of a perfectly honest man," [2] and of all his ideas this was the most original.

This rôle he himself attempted and, sad to say, it resulted in total failure. Louis XV. could hardly have found a worse adviser than this intelligent and upright man. Argenson, like many a similar character, wise in the closet, proved a very simpleton in action; he knew much of political theories and little of politicians; he was lacking in quick perception, in skill in dealing with others; he never understood the character of men who were neither honest nor truthful, and by such he was surrounded. No statesmen do more harm than those who are always right in their intentions and always wrong in their judgments; it would have been well for France if at this time she could have had the counsels of a man who was selfish and immoral and sagacious, like Dubois, instead of one who was upright and disinterested and wrong-headed, like Argenson.

The stammering Amelot had long been out of favor with Louis XV.; he encountered also the ill will of Mme. de Châteauroux and of Frederick, and in April, 1744, he was dismissed. For a while the king

[1] Argenson, *Pensées*, 500.

[2] *Mémoires*, i. 359.

acted as his own minister for foreign affairs, but no sovereign could attend to the detail of such an office, and least of all, Louis XV. It was necessary to fill the vacancy, and Villeneuve, who had represented the French court at Constantinople, was chosen for the place. His appointment was unlooked for, and his conduct was stupefying. As the fortunate man made his way to the royal closet, in answer to the summons, all the world of Versailles gathered about him to present their felicitations and crave his favor. He entered the closet, and soon an amazing rumor began to circulate in the antechamber; the new minister had pleaded his years and infirmities; he felt unequal to the responsibilities of the office and had declined to accept it. Such abnegation was no virtue in the eyes of courtiers; no one then believed that the post of honor was a private station; the man who declined a place, of which the emoluments were large and the patronage enormous, was regarded as an imbecile and an ingrate to the king. As Villeneuve came from his audience, and again passed through the antechamber, those who had sought his favor a few minutes before drew away to avoid the contagion of his society; he made his way through the crowd amid a chilling silence and the contempt of all beholders.[1]

The selection of Villeneuve was followed by another which was as little expected; to the surprise of the court and the equal surprise of the nominee, in November, 1744, the Marquis of Argenson was declared secretary of state for foreign affairs, and he eagerly accepted a position which he had long desired.

Two months later Charles VII. died, and that event changed the aspect of the political horizon. Neither

[1] *Mém. de Bernis*, i. 91.

Louis nor Argenson was inclined to make overtures to Maria Theresa, nor to seek a favorable peace as a condition of the unopposed election of her husband as emperor. "We must spend our last crown and lose our last soldier," wrote Argenson, "rather than allow the grand duke to become emperor." [1]

But it was difficult even to suggest another candidate. It was idle to advocate the claims of the new Elector of Bavaria; he was a youth of eighteen, who had inherited the needs and embarrassments of his father, and he wisely occupied himself in seeking an alliance with Maria Theresa in the hope of recovering his ancestral possessions. The only person whom the French could suggest as a possible candidate in opposition to the grand duke was Augustus III., the Elector of Saxony and king of Poland. Unfortunately, nothing could be done in the matter without the aid of Frederick, and Frederick loathed the Elector of Saxony. Not discouraged by this, Argenson sent an envoy to the court of Dresden to assure Augustus of the support of France in his candidacy for the imperial throne. Augustus had little taste for such adventures; he was already occupied in endeavors to obtain some reward from Maria Theresa in return for his support of her husband, and the offer of French aid was declined with diplomatic affability.

But Argenson had a mind of peculiar and unfortunate subtlety; when once he had formed a theory that Augustus desired to be emperor, no evidence could make him believe that he was mistaken; the more strenuously the elector declined to be a candidate, the more certain was the minister that he really lusted for the dignity, and only wished to be urged before

[1] *Mém* of August 12, 1745.

declaring his candidacy. "Flattered by the hope of this dignity," he wrote of Augustus, "his desire for it will grow stronger every day, and will at last lead him to overcome all obstacles in the way."[1] The French ambassador at Berlin was instructed to press these views on Frederick, but they only excited the ridicule of that clear-sighted monarch; to his good common sense such fine-spun theorizing seemed absurd in the field of politics. "Your predilection for the Saxons is incomprehensible to me," he wrote Valori. "You are so blind that nothing can make you see the light. Read the reports of St. Séverin, and if these don't serve as hellebore, I will declare you incurable. Adieu, my good Valori; have yourself bled three times a day and drink a great deal of water."[2] No hellebore could cure Argenson's delusions, and the French continued to offer a vain and irritating opposition to the election of the grand duke.

Frederick, on the other hand, was engaged in negotiations for peace, and hoped to receive some advantage in return for his vote in favor of Austria's candidate. At first he demanded "a good morsel," and when it was evident that Maria Theresa had no thought of surrendering more territory, he offered his support if he could be assured of Silesia.[3] He was hopeful of the success of these negotiations, but he

[1] Argenson to Valori, March, 1745. Frederick said contemptuously of the man who sacrificed the interests of his country in his zeal for the Prussian king, "He is one of those feeble intellects, who, when they have formed a prejudice, can't be made to abandon it." *Pol. Cor.*, v. 302.

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, iv. 115, April 9, 1745.

[3] Frederick to Andrié, January 26, February 19, July 25, 1745; Podewils, April 2, etc.

prepared for their failure. The campaign in Bohemia had exhausted his ready money, and he now asked Louis XV. for a subsidy. Even Frederick did not wish this request to reach Versailles just as it was announced to the world that he had made a separate peace and for the second time left France in the lurch. Accordingly, Podewils was instructed to examine the dispatches, and if peace could be obtained on satisfactory terms, to inform the French that the emperor's death had worked a dissolution of the alliance between France and Prussia, and Frederick had therefore decided to make peace for himself; but should Maria Theresa refuse any concessions, the minister must forward forthwith the demand for a subsidy, and urge with all possible force on the French, that by the terms of the treaty they were bound to furnish this aid for the needs of a faithful ally.[1]

The odds turned against this bold and unscrupulous player. Maria Theresa yielded only when forced by dire necessity, and it was always most reluctantly that she would yield anything to Frederick. She now refused to listen to the advice of the English, or to have any dealings with one whom she stigmatized as a royal outlaw. She declared that Frederick's bad faith had forfeited the grant of Silesia; she summoned the inhabitants of that province to return to the allegiance of their lawful sovereign, and she would make no peace.

The prospects of the Prussian king seemed dark. The young Elector of Bavaria had deserted the alliance, the king of Poland was hostile, even the empress of

[1] Such is the substance and in part almost the very words of Frederick's letters of instruction to Podewils, April 2, 14, May 8; to Louis, May 2; to Chambrier, July 5.

Russia, on whose friendship he had relied, experienced a sudden change of heart and intimated that she might be found among his adversaries; his enemies were numerous, his friends were lukewarm, his funds were low. But it was at such emergencies that the real greatness of Frederick's character appeared. One tires of the perpetual trickery of his conduct, and of letters in which his contempt for good faith is so apparent that it seems strange any one should have been deceived by them. But when dangers thickened, when all deserted him, when he could rely only on his own genius to escape utter ruin, the indomitable and heroic character of the man appeared in every line he wrote, and the Seven Years' war was to show that the professions he now made were no idle form of words. His faithful minister, Podewils, was alarmed at the coalition against Prussia, and warned his master that he was hazarding the fortune and the existence of his country, and it might be well to yield something and save the rest.[1] "You think like an honest man," replied Frederick, "and if I were Podewils I should be of the same opinion. But I have crossed the Rubicon. I will sustain my power, or all shall perish and the Prussian name be buried with me. . . . It has been my glory to increase the power of my house; I have played an important part among the crowned heads of Europe, and this I will sustain at the risk of my fortune and my life. . . . If misfortune comes, bear it with magnanimity and constancy; surely I shall suffer the most. . . . If I must perish, it shall be with glory and sword in hand. Learn from one who has not

[1] "Votre Majesté se rendrait responsable à Elle-même et à toute sa postérité, si Elle voulait mettre toute la fortune de son état au hasard d'être renversée du fond au comble."

listened often to Elsner's sermons, nor any other sermons, that we must oppose a brow of iron to the misfortunes we may encounter." [1]

Both France and Prussia now prepared for an active campaign. Frederick desired the French to send a powerful army into Germany; a diversion there might draw away some of the forces of Maria Theresa, and render it easier for him to oppose the Austrians in Silesia. But this the French were not inclined to do; their misfortunes in Bohemia and Bavaria had destroyed any taste for ventures in the interior of a foreign country, far removed from any base of supplies; they resolved to use their forces nearer home, to the great dissatisfaction of their ally.

Your campaign in Flanders will do me no good, said Frederick; a campaign in Bavaria or Westphalia will do us no good, replied the French. The Low Countries were selected as the field of principal activity, and wisely so; there French armies could easily reach the scene of war, and conquests might be useful to France herself. By April ninety thousand men were under arms in the Netherlands, and this great force was commanded by Marshal Saxe, the ablest general in Europe.

France has usually been prolific in great soldiers, but in the long decline of the monarchy, military genius shared in the decrepitude of an infirm state; from the end of the war of the Spanish Succession until the outbreak of the wars of the Revolution, no Frenchman proved himself a general of the first order. The ill success of the French armies thus far had been to some extent due to the mediocrity of their leaders: Belle Isle was energetic and courageous, but he could

[1] Frederick to Podewils, April 27, 29, 1745.

not be regarded as an officer of unusual ability; Broglie and Noailles, through long military careers, had shown themselves cautious, prudent, well-trained soldiers, who rarely made serious blunders and never achieved brilliant results; those who owed their military positions to their rank or their favor, like Conti, or Clermont, or Richelieu, were still less qualified for important commands. It was to the genius of a foreigner that France was indebted for the victories which changed the course of the war and checked the formidable coalition against her.

Maurice de Saxe was a soldier of fortune, but his genius, his adventurous life, and his restless ambition made him one of the most famous of his class. No vision of power or fame could be too remote to tempt his fancy; no undertaking was so difficult as to discourage his ardor; no dissipation too reckless to amuse his leisure. He was the manner of man that we could expect from a knowledge of his ancestry. Many members of the ancient and illustrious House of Königsmarck had been soldiers of fortune; they had been equally known for bravery and licentiousness, and they had sought adventure and glory under many flags. Maurice was not the first of the family to enter the service of France. His great uncle had served under Turenne, had earned the praise of that illustrious commander, and had received a sword of honor from Louis XIV. An uncle of Maurice fled from England to escape the odium of a murder he was charged with having planned, and afterward served with valor in the French army; strict in his religious belief, if not in his morality, he refused to renounce his Protestant faith at the request of Louis XIV., and died a soldier of the republic of Venice, fighting against the Turk.

Another uncle of Maurice was the ill-fated Philip of Königsmarck, the lover of Sophia Dorothea, wife of the future George I. of England, who met a mysterious fate as a result of that intrigue. The tragedy was involved in such obscurity that it was not known whether Philip was dead or imprisoned; his sister, the charming Aurora of Königsmarck, resolved to solve the mystery and to avenge her brother, and in this quest she applied for aid to Frederick Augustus, then Elector of Saxony and afterwards king of Poland. She did not get the revenge she sought, but she secured a royal lover instead, and in 1696 Maurice de Saxe was born, the illegitimate son of the Elector of Saxony and of the beautiful Aurora. His father, Augustus the Strong, as he was called, did much to increase the ranks of bastard princes; it was said that he had three hundred and fifty-four illegitimate children, and even if with Augustus, as with Don Juan, the famè of his exploits was exaggerated by the Leporellos who sang of them, the young Maurice did not learn a rigid morality from such a parent. Augustus was a Protestant by birth, and became a Catholic from ambition, but, as has been truly said, he always remained a Mahometan in morals.[1] Among all the German courts, his was preëminent for luxury, for prodigality, and for license.

Maurice early began a career of dissipation, but he displayed also a taste for war and the qualities of a soldier. When a lad of twelve he served with credit in the war of the Spanish Succession, and exhibited such a reckless courage that Prince Eugene warned him not to confound temerity with valor. While he was still a young man his unquiet ambition led him

[1] Lémontey, *Histoire de la régence.*

into many wild schemes. He was elected Duke of Courland, and with a handful of followers he endeavored, though in vain, to hold his principality against a Russian army. It was said that either Anna Ivanovna or Elizabeth Petrovna, both of whom in turn ruled over Russia, would have been willing to take for a husband this dashing young adventurer, but, perhaps because he was uncertain which to choose, he finally got neither. In 1721, he entered the service of France, and purchased the colonelcy of a regiment. When he was not engaged in roaming over Europe in search of a throne or a royal bride, he lived for the most part in Paris, and he became a leader in the most prodigal and dissipated society that could be found in that capital. The famous actress, Adrienne Lecouvreur, was one of his mistresses, and when he was seeking his fortune in Courland she pledged her jewels, of enormous value, to assist the ambition of her lover.

In the war of the Polish Succession he served creditably, and was promoted to be a lieutenant-general, but peace left him again to seek occupation in the pleasures of Paris. At the outbreak of the war of the Austrian Succession Maurice was a man of forty-four; he was favorably known as an officer, but better known for his gallantries and his reckless dissipation, and the uneasy ambition which had involved him in so many chimerical projects was still unsatisfied. At last his opportunity came, and he won fame in the few years that were left him.

It was at Prague that Maurice first attracted the attention of Europe to his skill as a soldier. The capture of a great city by a handful of men, accomplished almost without bloodshed, was an extraordinary achievement in those days of tedious sieges; it

was a different kind of warfare from the slow circumvallations by which Louis XIV. had occupied months in taking towns less strong and less important than the capital of Bohemia.

During the succeeding campaign in Bavaria, when the French armies were under timid and infirm leaders like Maillebois and Broglie, Maurice was the only general in whose skill and courage the soldiers had confidence. "I have never seen an army so poorly governed as this," wrote an officer; "if the Count of Saxe, who has to attend to everything, were removed, I don't know what would become of us."[1] Notwithstanding such services, Maurice had not yet attained the highest rank in his profession. If Louis XV. was not pious he was bigoted, and he hesitated to make a Protestant marshal of France. He distrusted also Maurice's restless temperament. "Shall we confide to him alone the safety of a province?" the king wrote to Noailles; "he who is a Huguenot, who wishes to become a sovereign, and who, when he is opposed, says always that he will seek some other service."[2]

But at last both the king and the public felt that the Saxon general was the only man who could save the country from the invasion which threatened it. In 1744 Maurice de Saxe received a marshal's baton; he was the only Protestant, except Lowendahl, upon whom this honor was conferred from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes until the wars of Napoleon.[3] In 1745, he was given command of the army in the Low Countries.

On May 8, Louis joined the army. In this cam-

[1] Letter of Count Poniatowski, cited by Taillandier.

[2] Louis to Noailles, August 1, 1743.

[3] Lowendahl, who was also a foreigner, became a Catholic.

paign, as in all his campaigns, the king proved himself a good soldier; he was courageous; unlike his predecessor, he had no fear of taking the risk of a battle; he was willing to expose his own person, and to incur the chance of defeat when there was a reasonable hope of victory, and he had the good sense always to follow the advice of experienced generals.

The army of the allies in the Low Countries was about fifty thousand strong, and was under the command of the Duke of Cumberland, then a young man of twenty-two, with Marshal Königsegg as his adviser. The French laid siege to Tournay, and Cumberland resolved to go to the relief of the town. His route was by way of Mons, and in order to check his advance Maurice led the bulk of the French army towards Fontenoy. This movement did not escape criticism. By dividing his forces the critics declared that he exposed himself to a serious risk. It was uncertain by which road the allies would finally endeavor to reach Tournay; by changing their route they could surprise and overpower the forces left at the siege of the town and cut off the retreat of the rest of the army. Maurice's fame as a general was not yet established, he had won no great battle, and this was his first appearance as commander-in-chief of the principal army in the field. His physical condition also excited grave doubts as to his ability to conduct a campaign with success. When Maurice was chosen to command the army it seemed that his opportunity for glory had come too late. The exposures of past years, aggravated by a life of unceasing dissipation, had told upon his powerful frame; he was suffering from dropsy; his face was so pale, his body so swollen, and his movements so infirm, that it was thought he had not many months

to live; he was unable to ride on horseback, and he was carried about the army in a sort of wicker chair or basket, which he called his cradle. It was not strange that many declared that the marshal's infirmities had weakened his mental powers, and felt at liberty to question the wisdom of his tactics. These murmurs were silenced by the judicious conduct of the king. He refused to interfere with Maurice's plans, and turning to the marshal, in the presence of a group of courtiers and officers, he said in a loud voice, "When I chose you to command my army, I intended that you should be obeyed by every one, and I myself will be the first to set the example."

Maurice's infirmities did not affect the enthusiasm of his men. During long years of ill success the French soldiers had lost confidence in their officers, and as a result they had shown little of their usual dash and courage. When Vauvenargues was with the army in Bohemia, he wrote that the soldiers approached the enemy like a body of Capucin monks starting for matins.

Now all were eager for action and confident of success. The approaching contest suggested interesting historical parallels. Both the king of France and the dauphin were present with the French army; the English were under the command of a son of their king. It was the first time, said Louis, that the armies of the two nations had met under such leadership since the battle of Poitiers, and he hoped now for better fortune than had befallen King John when he encountered the Black Prince. Maurice desired Louis to station himself on the further side of the Scheldt during the engagement, that his retreat might be easier in case of defeat, but the king refused to follow

such counsels, and in the most doubtful hours of the day he remained at Calonne, watching the battle from a spot not too distant to be reached by an occasional shell.

In numbers the two armies were now nearly equal, the allies had almost fifty thousand men, and the French about fifty-five thousand, but in position the latter had a decided advantage. Maurice had stationed his army by the Scheldt, and at the towns of Antoine, Fontenoy, and Barry strong batteries were placed blocking the roads leading towards Tournay. These towns were equidistant, and the front of the French army extended about two miles from Antoine to Barry. The position of Barry was further strengthened by the existence of an extensive wood, through which the enemy could with difficulty make its way, while Fontenoy, at the centre of the line, was strongly fortified. Thus any advance of the allies towards Tournay was checked, while an attempt to break the line of an army equal or superior in numbers and strongly fortified was a hazardous undertaking. If the English had contented themselves with skirmishing and cutting off supplies, such a course, Maurice said, would have proved embarrassing to him; but the young Duke of Cumberland was eager for a battle, and an immediate attack was decided upon.[1]

By five o'clock on the morning of May 11 the firing began, and by six the engagement became general. It resulted in a repulse of the allies all along the line. The Dutch held the left and advanced upon Antoine,

[1] Carlyle says that Marshal Königsegg advised against an immediate attack, but was overruled by Cumberland. This seems to be a mistake, judging by Königsegg's own letter the day of the battle, cited in Arneth, iii. 59 and note.

but they were met by a hot fire from the batteries in the village and the other side of the Scheldt, which discouraged their zeal; they fell back and took no further part in the battle; they did nothing, says Carlyle, "but patiently expect when it should be time to run." [1]

Such was the vigor and pertinacity of the English assault that the time for running was long postponed. Maurice checked those who congratulated him on the repulse of the enemy before Antoine. "We have now to do with the English," he said, "and they will be harder to digest."

The advance of the English upon Barry was, however, neither successful nor vigorous; whether embarrassed by the woods or discouraged by the French intrenchments, the attack was carried on in a half-hearted manner, and nothing was accomplished. It was around the village of Fontenoy that the real battle was fought. This was the centre of the position, and its capture would cut the French army in two. The English charged repeatedly, but the place was too strong to be carried; at ten o'clock the allies had been repulsed at every point; the battle seemed won, but really it had hardly begun. Convinced that it was impossible to carry either Fontenoy or Barry, Cumberland resolved to force his way between the two towns, and thus penetrate beyond the fire of the batteries which had checked his advance. Between the towns extended a long ravine, which Maurice had not fortified, because he thought no army would be rash

[1] Arneth criticises Carlyle severely for saying that the Austrians were stationed with the Dutch before Antoine and deserved the same condemnation for cowardly conduct. The Austrian historian apparently proves that Carlyle was either mistaken as to the facts, or careless in his way of stating them.

enough to enter it; the descent into it was steep, the defile was filled with fallen trees, and forces working their way through would be exposed to the French fire, both from Fontenoy and Barry. Undismayed by such difficulties, the English resolved on the attempt; it was impossible for the cavalry to get through, and the cannon were drawn by men; though exposed to a fierce fire on either side, the infantry doggedly worked their way over the obstacles. The English column slowly traversed the ravine, and at last emerged on the rising ground at the further side, in the rear of Fontenoy. As they came over the ridge of the hill the French thought at first it was but a body of stragglers, but an army appeared before them in solid column, fifteen thousand strong. The opposing forces were within fifty feet of each other, and Lord Charles Hay, advancing in front of his regiment, pulled off his hat to the French officers, who politely returned the salute. "Tell your men to fire!" cried Hay. "No," replied the Count of Auteroche, "we never fire first." This famous incident is so well established by the testimony of those who were present that it cannot be questioned, but it has been much misconstrued. It was not a display of excessive courtesy, most unseemly when the fate of a battle and the lives of soldiers were at stake; it was a rule of tactics, and not a bit of rodomontade, to which Auteroche gave utterance.[1] In a book called "Mes Rêveries," writ-

[1] The statements given by Valfons, *Souvenirs*, 143, and D'Espagnac, *Maurice de Saxe*, ii. 91, both present at the battle, seem to establish the correctness of this incident, which, when understood, loses much of its theatrical character. A statement of Lord Charles Hay is cited by Carlyle, but does not contradict the French accounts, though it gives some other talk between the officers.

ten by Maurice de Saxe, and in which he stated the principles of military tactics, we find this rule laid down with emphasis: When two battalions approach, the one that fires first is beaten. "You are beaten," he says, "if you fire against an enemy approaching with rapidity. Your troop flatters itself that its fire will annihilate the enemy, and when it sees how little effect it has produced, it will surely run; the company which has fired is out of countenance when it sees approaching through the smoke those who have reserved their fire." In those days of poor guns, the number who fell at a discharge was often very small. "I have seen whole discharges which did not kill four men," he says, "and I have never seen enough harm done to arrest an advance;" firing made more noise than it did harm, he continues; it was at the bayonet charge that men were killed, and he who did the killing won the battle. At the battle of Castiglione, he tells us, the French approached the enemy without firing; at twenty-five paces the Imperialists fired in good order and with all possible precautions, but the French at once dashed forward and routed them.[1]

The opinion of a great general like Maurice is certainly entitled to consideration; the inefficacy of firearms made war a very different affair from what it is now, and these principles can be found laid down, not only by Saxe, but by other French authorities; it was thought that a company which had fired, and saw the enemy approaching with their guns still loaded and their bayonets set, was very apt to break and run, and that disadvantage more than compensated for the few men who might fall at the first discharge. The

[1] *Mes Rêveries*, i. 76, 77, 80, 81, *et pas.*

famous exchange of courtesies at Fontenoy was in reality only obedience to a rule of tactics.

The English had now penetrated into the heart of the French position, and the result of the battle seemed very problematical. Louis was advised to retreat, but he stubbornly refused to do so, and if the English had been finally successful, he might have shared the fate of King John at Poitiers and completed the historical parallel. Frederick said that if Cumberland had now divided his forces and, turning either way, taken the French on the flank, he might have annihilated his opponents and gained a great victory. If such a manœuvre was possible, it was not attempted, but the English phalanx repulsed with heavy losses the repeated attacks which the French made upon it. Yet Maurice was guilty of no idle waste of life in these assaults. The English had no cavalry and could not pursue the broken French regiments; exposed to these constant attacks, their column made slow progress, and in the mean time Maurice had an opportunity to reorganize his forces and draw reinforcements from other quarters.[1] At two o'clock a final assault settled the fate of the day. Strong bodies of troops, still comparatively fresh, attacked the English on either flank, while a newly placed battery opened a hot fire upon them from the front. At last the column broke and the battle of Fontenoy was won. The French were too much exhausted by seven hours of severe fighting to attempt any prolonged pursuit, and Maurice was not wont to disturb himself with pursuing an enemy when the glory of victory had been secured. The loss of the allies, including prisoners, was over ten thousand, and the French lost in killed and

[1] D'Espagnac, ii. 98, 99.

wounded about seven thousand, including nearly six hundred officers.[1]

Fontenoy was the first victory of importance which the French had won during almost five years of warfare; it was gained over their ancient and traditional enemies; their king had borne his share in the dangers of the day, and it excited unbounded enthusiasm. Illuminations blazed and Te Deums were sung in honor of the glorious event; it was celebrated in countless effusions by poets of all degrees, from Voltaire down to the obscurest scribbler of the rue St. Denis. The victory of Fontenoy insured the capture of Tournay, which soon surrendered. Oudenarde, Ostend, and Bruges were afterwards taken with little trouble.

While the French were victorious in the Low Countries, the king of Prussia was equally successful in Silesia. His task was more difficult because he was opposed by superior numbers, but Frederick's skill and the discipline of his soldiers counterbalanced any advantage in the size of the Austrian armies. At this time, as so often in his adventurous career, the king risked all rather than yield anything, and the possibilities of ruin which appalled Podewils did not alarm Frederick; he trusted to his own genius and to the blunders of his adversaries, and between the two he

[1] For the battle of Fontenoy see the reports of Maurice, *Lettres de Maurice de Saxe*, t. i., and the official English reports. In D'Espagnac's *Maurice de Saxe* is a full and correct account of the battle, given by an officer who took part in it and was on intimate terms with the French commander. The *Souvenirs* of Valfons, who also took part in the engagement, are valuable, though less accurate than the account of D'Espagnac. Broglie has given an interesting account of the battle. There is much discrepancy as to the losses on either side.

always secured a safe deliverance. Yet no one realized better than he the risks against which neither genius nor vigilance could surely guard. "The operations of war are very complicated," he wrote in a letter at this time, "and require the concurrence of design and chance; provisions must be sufficient, information correct, an infinite number of officers must execute orders with intelligence and skill; a chance turns to success the faults of generals, or ruins the most skillful dispositions; the chapter of accidents is always large and the poor generals are much to be commiserated, for the public knows only enough to condemn the unfortunate and extol the successful."[1] His situation was full of peril, the existence of the state hung upon a hair, he wrote Podewils; but if ruin would have followed defeat, safety was assured by victory; at Hohenfriedberg on the 4th of June, 1745, the Austrian and Saxon army was completely defeated with a loss of sixteen thousand men, and Maria Theresa's hopes to reduce Prussia to a mere electorate of Brandenburg, an unimportant factor in German politics, were blasted.[2] Frederick usually attached little importance to Te Deums, but he felt that there was much cause for thankfulness. "Tedeumize," he wrote his minister, "as is fitting."[3]

It was at Hohenfriedberg that Frederick displayed for the first time military talents of a high order; Mollwitz was won by the generalship of Schwerin after the king had fled from the field; success at Chotusitz was due to the steadfastness and discipline of the Prussian soldiers; at Hohenfriedberg, Freder-

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, iv. 217.
[2] *Ib.*, 181, 260, etc.
[3] *Ib.*, 187, "Faites tedeumiser," etc.

ick showed that skill as a tactician in the hour of battle which was to make him the most famous general of Europe. The result was the more gratifying to him because he had derived very little satisfaction from the success of his allies at Fontenoy. It is possible that Frederick was not free from a certain feeling of jealousy that another monarch should win battles; the future was to show how little cause Frederick the Great had to be jealous of Louis XV. as a rival for military glory, but the Prussian king's fame as a general was not then established; at all events he contented himself with congratulating Louis on the results at Fontenoy in a brief postscript, and even this he delayed until he had himself gained the battle of Hohenfriedberg.[1] He had, moreover, more substantial reasons for feeling little pleasure at the French victory. It was with a very ill will that Frederick saw the French concentrate their forces in the Low Countries, and certainly a powerful diversion in Bavaria or Westphalia would have been far more useful to him than a victory at Fontenoy. "A campaign in Flanders," he wrote, "will be as useful to the king of Prussia as one in Monomotapa." "If the king had just come from an insane asylum, he might be persuaded that a campaign in Flanders would be of great service to him, but as it is, neither he nor the smallest drummer boy in his army believe it." "If the Spanish make a descent on the Canary Islands, the king of France takes Tournay, or Thomas Tulican lays siege to Babylon, it is all the same thing, and nobody believes this will make the slightest change in the war in Bohemia or Moravia."[2] The victory at Fontenoy,

[1] Frederick to Louis, June 4, 1745.

[2] *Mém.* of May 16, 1745.

he growled, was of as much importance to him as a battle won on the shores of the Scamander.

The Prussian king had grounds for discontent with his allies other than their refusal to carry on the campaign in the manner most advantageous to him. It was with reluctance that he had asked a subsidy from France; though his feelings were not delicate, he was loath to become a French pensioner. But his treasury was empty and his needs were great, and he demanded a subsidy in the peremptory tone that was habitual with him in dealings with his associates. If the Prussian treasury was empty, that of France was bankrupt, and Frederick's constant reproaches did not make his allies any better natured or any more inclined to inconvenience themselves to accommodate him. He asked for twelve million francs, and he wanted them without delay; by dint of the efforts of Argenson, always his friend and admirer, it was at last decided to offer a subsidy of five hundred thousand livres a month; it would have been wiser to refuse the request altogether. "It is a subsidy that might be offered to a Landgrave of Darmstadt," said Frederick contemptuously, and he refused to accept it.[1]

Throughout their second alliance with Frederick the policy of the French was the most unwise they could have adopted; they neither acceded to all his requests, which possibly would have kept him faithful to the cause, nor did they consider only their own interests and leave him to his fate, as he was sure to leave them at the proper time. Frederick's conduct towards his allies in 1742 was treacherous, but no such charge can be made in 1745. If the French continued to trust him, it showed that they would not

[1] *Mém. de Valori*, i. 241.

see, for the king made no effort to conceal the fact that he should consider only his own interests. "God keep me from embarking again with such ungrateful friends and such miserable politicians," he said, and in his letters to the French court he stated the same thing in hardly less vigorous language.[1]

The English had not been able to induce Maria Theresa to abandon her hopes of humbling Frederick, but they resolved to support her no longer in such an endeavor. On August 26, 1745, a convention was signed between England and Prussia by which these countries made peace, and Frederick was guaranteed the possession of Silesia.

The queen found consolation for the desertion of her English allies in success in another quarter; a desire as dear to her heart as the recovery of her lost Silesia was at last gratified. From the first it had been apparent to any one who was not blinded by prejudice that the election of the grand duke as emperor was a certainty, and if there had been any doubt, this result was insured by the conduct of the French. The laws of the empire required that the electors should be free from intimidation, and that no armies should approach the place where they met. It was a rule never respected when there was a contested election, and the presence of forty thousand French soldiers had materially helped to secure the choice of Charles VII. But now the troops under Conti, the only French army in Germany, recrossed the Rhine. "We will act on those German princes metaphysically, instead of physically," said Argenson, with his usual philosophical optimism, "and all good German patriots, freed from the irritation excited by a French

[1] *Pol.-Cor.*, iv. 305.

army, will not hesitate to cast their votes for the Elector of Saxony." It was with good cause that Frederick prayed God to deliver him from such politicians. Maria Theresa was not troubled by these scruples, and the power of Austria was exerted in bringing the electors to the support of the grand duke. There was little trouble in inducing them to adopt this course; when once French pressure was removed, the electoral body naturally reverted to the support of the Austrian candidate, as it had done for centuries. The meeting of the electoral college was called for September. Frederick contented himself with protesting mildly, and directed his representatives to take no part. The French were placed in a less dignified position; they continued to protest against the election, and no one heeded their protests; they pressed the claims of the Elector of Saxony, and no one would listen to their arguments; even their representative, on the plea that his passports were not sufficient, was turned back and failed to gain admission into Frankfort. As a final humiliation, the ambassador of Augustus III., the Saxon elector, whom Argenson had selected as the candidate of France, announced that his own vote would be cast for the grand duke. This was the last blow, and even the hopefulness of Argenson could not bear up under it; Augustus was an ingrate and an imbecile, the minister complained, he might have been the master and he chose to be the slave.[1] Such laments did not improve the situation; on the 13th of September, 1745, Maria Theresa's husband, the former Duke of Lorraine and the present Grand Duke of Tuscany, was unanimously elected as chief of the Holy Roman Empire, and on the 4th

[1] Argenson to St. Severin, August, 1745.

of October he was consecrated emperor as Francis the First.

It was not the emperor who was the centre of attraction to the great multitude gathered at Frankfort for this fête; the eyes of all were turned upon the heroic queen, who had sustained herself against Europe in arms, who, left alone and friendless, had saved from destruction the heritage of her forefathers, who had regained for her family the dignity which had so long been theirs, and now placed on her husband's brow the crown of Charlemagne. It was with good reason that the plaudits of the multitude went up as Maria Theresa stood in the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville, waving her handkerchief and crying "Long live Francis First," when her husband went by in solemn procession.

The election of Francis gratified a desire which the queen had pursued with unwavering tenacity from the day of her father's death; but vengeance upon her despoiler was equally dear to her heart, and to accomplish this she needed peace with France. England had already made terms with Frederick, and another brilliant victory had proved the genius of Prussia's king. At Sohr, on September 30, 1745, thirty thousand Austrians attacked the Prussian army only nineteen thousand strong. They had been able to steal a march on Frederick's vigilance and burst upon him unawares; his camp was plundered, his private papers captured, and Maria Theresa had the satisfaction of studying the wiles and devices of her enemy. It was the only satisfaction she derived from the battle of Sohr.

At first Frederick's position seemed hopeless; "at Hohenfriedberg," he said, "I was fighting for Silesia,

but at Sohr I fought for my life."[1] But his readiness did not desert him, and the advantage the Austrians gained by the surprise was soon overcome by his skillful dispositions; while eight thousand Pandours were reveling in the plunder of the camp and drinking the good wines intended for the king of Prussia, Frederick rallied his men, and their superior discipline counterbalanced any inferiority in numbers; the battle resulted in a great Prussian victory.[2]

When Maria Theresa had such an opponent, she could spare no forces for distant campaigns. From the events of the last two years she had also learned that there was no prospect of conquering Alsace and Lorraine; the French had now three hundred thousand men under arms, and they had Marshal Saxe for a leader; not only could they repel invasion from their frontiers, but they could continue their victorious career in the Low Countries.

The only advantage which France could derive from a continuance of the war was to strengthen her northern boundary by the acquisition of additional territory in Flanders, and of all her possessions, Maria Theresa was most willing to sacrifice the Low Countries. The occupation of Silesia by Prussia was a constant menace to Vienna itself, but while additional territory in Flanders would be an important gain for France, it would be an unimportant loss for Austria. Unless the men governing France were bereft of wisdom, it seemed that they would now be glad to make peace upon terms advantageous to their own country, and Maria Theresa would thus be left free to concen-

[1] *Mém. de Valori*, i. 249.

[2] See *Pol. Cor.*, iv. 291, etc., for Frederick's account of this battle.

trate all her forces for the prosecution of the war with Frederick, and be saved the bitter necessity of conceding favorable terms to one whom she stigmatized as a liar, a robber, and a blasphemer.

It was accordingly intimated to the French envoys that the queen was ready to consider conditions of peace far different from those which she had demanded two years before, and this intelligence was at once communicated to Versailles. If Richelieu or Mazarin had been at the head of the government these overtures would have resulted in peace, France would have gained something by the war of the Austrian Succession, and the lives and money of the French people would not have been wasted in three years more of warfare. Unfortunately, on the throne was a listless monarch, to whom his intrigues with Mme. de Pompadour were of more interest than whether Alsace should become German or Flanders should become French, and at the head of the department of foreign affairs was an amiable philosopher who had decided that the boundaries of his country needed no further extension, and that the end to be sought was not to strengthen France, but to strengthen Prussia. In this endeavor he was successful, but it is doubtful if his countrymen owe him any gratitude for his exertions. It was, indeed, decided by a majority of the council that some response should be made to the overtures of Maria Theresa, but while Argenson obeyed the instruction of his colleagues, he did all in his power to prevent the success of negotiations which did not accord with his doctrines. France, he wrote, might wisely carry on war for four years more, if this was necessary to secure Silesia for Prussia; when his representative received such instruc-

tions he was not likely to smooth the road for a peace of which the real object was to leave Maria Theresa free to make another effort to win back that province.[1]

In the mean time events had marched with their customary rapidity when the interests of Frederick were concerned. A plan had been devised for the invasion of Prussia which would have been formidable had it been executed with vigor. The Austrians and Saxons were to unite their forces in Saxony and proceed directly upon Berlin before Frederick could interpose any successful resistance. This project had been approved by Maria Theresa, and was to be put into effect by Prince Charles; naturally the execution was as timid as the conception had been bold. In November, after much delay, the Austrian army entered Saxony, hoping to take Frederick unawares. But it was rarely that his vigilance was surprised, and he had already received secret information of these plans for the invasion of Prussia. Following his favorite policy of forestalling an attack by himself attacking, he at once invaded Saxony. At this exhibition of vigor Prince Charles's courage failed him, and he hastily fell back into Bohemia. "I was never so embarrassed in my life," wrote that helpless general.[2] If he was uncertain what to do, Frederick was not; the Prussians continued to overrun Saxony, levying heavy contributions and devastating that unfortunate country. On December 15, a great battle was fought at Kesselsdorf, near Dresden, and the Saxon army was annihilated.

Almost within sound of the cannon the representatives of France and Austria met to see if peace could

[1] *Correspondance de Saxe, Aff. Etr.*

[2] Letter of November 26, 1745, cited by Arneth.

be made between their countries. Argenson had hampered the instructions he had been obliged to send with every restriction that could insure their failure, and they had been placed in the hands of a timid and inexperienced agent. Though Frederick had already agreed on terms with England, though he hardly concealed his purpose to make peace with Maria Theresa whenever satisfactory conditions could be obtained, Argenson refused to believe that the Prussian king would desert the French alliance. But even if the reports of Frederick's intentions that reached him from every diplomatic agent were correct, the minister would not allow this to modify his conduct. The king of France, he said, in one of the sounding phrases he loved to utter, would rather be deceived by others than himself deceive. Such was not the maxim of the monarch he so greatly admired, for Frederick laid down, among many other reasons for deserting his allies, the suspicion that they might desert him.

In his heart Argenson was unwilling to make any peace which would leave Austria free to act against Frederick, and might defeat that growth of the power of Prussia which he deemed vital to the best interests of France. Yet so eager was Maria Theresa to agree upon terms that she was willing to make great concessions. The French envoy said that under no circumstances must France be required to act against Frederick, and Harrach replied that this was not demanded. In the Low Countries Harrach offered to cede to France Ypres and Furnes, and he was authorized to yield still more. But this availed nothing, for Vaulgrenant had been instructed that no peace could be made unless the demands of Don Philip of Spain

were fully satisfied. Harrach said that Maria Theresa would cede to him the duchies of Parma and Piacenza and Pavia, a more extensive principality than he was ever actually to secure. He must have also Alexandria and Tortona, said the French representative, following strictly his instructions. "You cannot ask for them," replied Harrach; "they belong to the king of Sardinia; my mistress has no right to give them away." It was in vain that he argued thus. Vaulgrenant said that his instructions were precise and he could yield nothing; it was with dismay that Harrach found that no advantages for France would induce the representatives of that country to abandon impossible demands for a Spanish prince. At break of day the conference ended, and Harrach reluctantly turned his attention to an adversary who sought advantages for himself and not for his kinsfolk.[1]

France could have secured for herself half a dozen great cities; she could have obtained new territory that would have increased her wealth and strengthened her frontier; instead of this, she involved herself in three years more of warfare, because she insisted on acquisitions for a Spanish prince to which he had no shadow of just claim; it was not the only time in the eighteenth century that the alliance with Spain proved a misfortune for France.

Thus the negotiations for peace came to an end, to the regret of Maria Theresa and to the satisfaction of Argenson; nothing now remained for the empress queen but to abandon her hopes of recovering Silesia

[1] This abortive negotiation, which might have changed the condition of Europe, can be followed in *Cor. de Saxe*, 1745, *Aff. Etr.* An account based upon the Austrian authorities is given in Arneth, t. iii.

and make terms with Frederick. The defeats of Sohr and Kesselsdorf had discouraged her anticipations of military success; her ally, Augustus III., had been obliged to fly from Dresden and seek refuge in Prague, while Frederick pillaged Saxony with an earnest resolve to bring the elector to terms. "I don't like to carry on war like Attila," he wrote, "but it is my only resource. Eighty thousand soldiers in a country like Saxony cannot fail to ruin it in time."[1] Augustus had not sufficient fortitude to remain in exile and watch the systematic devastation of his country, and he consented to make peace with Prussia.

The Austrian ambassador had been instructed that if he could reach no conclusion with France he must address himself to Frederick and be prepared to accede to the convention of Hanover. Harrach found the representatives of France slow, timid, and ignorant as to the interests of their country, but he had no occasion for such complaints when at last he intimated to Frederick that Austria was ready to lay down her arms. The wise king felt the importance of obtaining peace, and peace at once; he knew that his mission was to strengthen Prussia, and not to waste the forces of his people in building up other states, or in gratifying the ambition of needy kinsmen; he allowed no secondary considerations to stand in the way of a treaty which should secure what was of real importance; in other words, Frederick showed as much wisdom as the French had shown folly, and procured for himself the advantages which they had thrown away. Such was not the conclusion which Harrach had desired; like Maria Theresa, he wanted peace with France and war with Prussia. "A curse

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, iv. 372, 376.

on all negotiations!" he wrote. "That which I had at heart met with failure, and that which I detest progresses with all imaginable success."[1] It was with an unwilling hand that on Christmas, 1745, he signed the treaty of Dresden, which secured Silesia to Frederick. Argenson had been loath to make peace with Austria without the coöperation of Prussia, but this feeling was not reciprocated by Frederick. There was indeed no reason why either party should not secure terms advantageous to itself, whenever they could be obtained. "You certainly should have known long ago that I would make peace, and you have only yourself to thank for it," Frederick said with entire truth to the French ambassador.[2] Once again France was left to carry on alone war against Austria and England, not for any advantages for herself, but in pursuance of the ruinous treaties and alliances to which she had become a party. "At least, Prussia has secured Silesia," was Argenson's consolation when he discovered that, as he would not abandon Frederick, Frederick had decided to abandon him; whether this was an advantage which justified France in undertaking a seven years' war is for posterity to decide.[3]

So far as material results were concerned, Frederick gained nothing by violating the treaty of Breslau; his hopes of conquest in Bohemia were disappointed; his zeal for the emperor, as his own writings show, was a mere pretense; his interference was not required to save France from dismemberment. The war had been

[1] Harrach to Ulfeld, December 23, 1745.

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, iv. 390.

[3] "Es war die erste Skizze des Werkes das die Siege von 1870 vollendet haben," Droysen justly says.

disastrous for the French while it was carried on in Germany, but when the scene of action was transferred to their own boundaries, fortune changed; a great leader was found in Maurice de Saxe, and neither Alsace nor Lorraine would have been lost to France if Frederick had remained tranquil. In the war which he undertook he exposed to imminent peril what he had already acquired, and he was glad to obtain peace on terms which left to him exactly what had been secured by the treaty of Breslau; he gained nothing, and he lost nothing. But if he had taken great risks and had not added to his domains, he had obtained what was equally dear to him, the admiration of his fellows; he had shown himself a great general, he had proved himself a great politician, he had escaped dangers which threatened his overthrow, he had established his position as the foremost man in Europe; if he had acquired no new provinces, he had gained fame, and when he returned to Berlin in triumph, for the first time the cry was heard, "Long live Frederick the Great!" Many a sovereign has been thus greeted in his lifetime, but since Charlemagne, only Peter of Russia and Frederick of Prussia have retained the title with posterity.

While the French were carrying on war against Maria Theresa in Germany and the Low Countries, in order to secure for Don Philip the principalities that had been promised him, hostilities proceeded in Italy without any very decided advantage to either party. It was late in 1743 when the treaty of Fontainebleau was signed, by which Louis promised to secure Milan, Parma, and Piacenza for his cousin. The campaign of the next year was not important in its results, but in 1745 the allied armies carried all

before them. Nice and Savoy were easily taken; Genoa joined the French; their armies penetrated into Piedmont, captured Tortona, Asti, and Casale, and laid siege to Alessandria. Charles Emmanuel was defeated at Bassignano and retreated in dismay; it seemed possible for the allies to reach Turin and become masters of all Piedmont.

Such was the course advocated by those familiar with the art of warfare, but it was not adopted. The Spanish queen had as implicit confidence in her talents for war as for diplomacy, and to her mind the way to carry on the campaign was to seize the provinces she wanted for her son and let everything else take care of itself. It was in vain that the French commanders remonstrated against a plan which would leave the army spread over a great territory and far removed from any base of supplies, with the Austrians on one side and the Sardinians on the other. The French ambassador was instructed to see the queen herself and ask her consent to a more rational system of operations, but he met with no success. He found the king and queen in bed, — they were generally in bed when they held their audiences, — but no sooner did he suggest the views of his court as to the campaign than the queen became so excited by this opposition to her plans that it was with difficulty she could express herself; her sentences poured out half finished and little connected. "We know what we will do," she cried; "they want to treat us as infants; every one must think for himself." So violent was her passion that she would talk no more, and proceeded to rise, though it was before the customary hour. "It is too early to get up," murmured the king, who at last took part in the conversation. "Stay in bed, if

you want to," vociferated his wife; "I wish to leave." The ambassador judged that his own further stay was injudicious, and the interview closed.[1]

The orders already sent by the Spanish court were not modified, and, following the commands of their imperious mistress, the Spanish troops separated from their French allies and entered the territories of which the infante hoped to become the sovereign. For a while they met with no opposition; Parma, Pavia, and Piacenza were captured. Exultant at his success, the infante pushed further on, and in December, 1745, he took possession of the city of Milan and laid siege to the citadel.[2]

These victories were possible because there were no forces with which to oppose the Spanish advance, but Philip had hardly made his entry into the city of which he hoped to become the duke, when Maria Theresa again made peace with Frederick, and thirty thousand soldiers advanced by forced marches to free Lombardy from invasion. By February, 1746, they reached the Po. The position of Don Philip was now dangerous; an overweening confidence was followed by acute alarm; the Spanish abandoned Milan, leaving part of their artillery in their haste; Parma and Pavia were captured by the Austrians, and Philip sent word to the French that they must come to his rescue. The union of the two armies did not improve the situation, and they were defeated by Prince Lich-

[1] Vauréal to Argenson, 1745, *Cor. d'Espagne.*

[2] "Il ne reste qu'à souhaiter que la suite des événements ne justifie point nostre sage prévoyance, et que l'Espagne n'ait pas lieu de se repentir de s'estre livrée avec trop de precipitation et de confiance à son envie démesurée de prendre possession des Milanois." Argenson to Rennes, January 11, 1746, *Cor. d'Espagne*, 488.

tenstein in the battle of Piacenza. "I hope they will make some change in their plan to hunt me out of Italy," said Maria Theresa in her exultation when she heard of the victory.[1]

The tide of fortune now ran steadily against the allies; they lost all they had gained in Italy, and by the winter of 1746, the condition of affairs had so changed that the Austrians invaded Provence. Neither in their prosperity nor in their adversity did united counsels prevail in the courts any more than in the armies of France and Spain. In the autumn of 1745, the extravagant demands made for Don Philip had repelled Maria Theresa and had driven her to make peace with Frederick, but in the winter following Argenson tried to win the king of Sardinia to his favorite scheme of a confederation of Italian princes, and offered for his assistance far more liberal terms than would have been acceptable to Spain.[2] The time had not come for a confederacy of Italian states any more than for an united Italy, and no one knew this better than Charles Emmanuel. He considered the propositions of the French minister while it seemed possible that France could hold the advantages she had gained, and rejected them when the Austrian reinforcements arrived. It was never difficult to get the better of Argenson in diplomatic finesse; "that man," said Richelieu, "was born to be a secretary of state in the Republic of Plato;" it is certain that he was sadly out of place among European diplomats in the last century, to whom good faith was a thing

[1] *Erizzo*, July 2, 1746, cited by Arneth.

[2] These negotiations can be followed in *Cor. de Turin*, 1745–46, and in Carutti's *Storia di Carlo Emmanuele*. The idea of an Italian confederacy Argenson obtained from Chauvelin.

unknown. At the last moment, Charles abruptly terminated the negotiations, surprised the French generals, who understood the king of Sardinia was now their ally, and raised the siege of Alessandria.

These abortive negotiations had for their only effect to increase the suspicion with which the Spanish queen always regarded France. To gain the alliance of Sardinia the French had promised Milan to its king, but they had already promised to conquer this province for the son of Elizabeth Farnese. "And the treaty of Fontainebleau," cried the Spanish queen, when it was suggested that she should agree to such an arrangement, "is there nothing sacred in the world?" "How many times have I told you that France would treat us as she always has done," she said, turning to her husband; and having thus expressed herself, she refused to discuss the matter further.[1]

The disasters in Italy offset the great victories which the French gained in Flanders, and the Spanish alliance, instead of an advantage, was felt to be a positive hindrance. "It is like a ball attached to the leg of a criminal," said Argenson; "if the Spanish would only desert our alliance, we might keep our conquests for ourselves; as it is, the king holds them only to exchange for establishments for the infante."[2]

The Spanish were quite willing to make terms for themselves if they could obtain what they wanted, and the family compact was not treated as eternal or indissoluble by one side any more than by the other. Secret agents offered the alliance of Spain to Maria Theresa and her coöperation in conquering Lorraine from France, if Don Philip could have what he

[1] Vauréal to Argenson, January 27, 1746.

[2] Argenson to Vauréal, 1746, *pas.*; *Cor. d'Esp.*, 488, 9.

desired.[1] These suggestions found no favor with the empress queen: what she must give to Don Philip was a certain loss; what might be conquered from France was an uncertain gain. The war continued, but the burden of finding an establishment for the infante was soon thrown entirely on France. The Duke of Noailles was sent on a solemn embassy to Madrid, to assure their Catholic majesties that Louis XV. would attend to the interests of his son-in-law, even at the hazard of his own frontiers, but also to suggest, in view of the terrible burden of this long war, that perhaps an abatement could be made from the great promises contained in the treaty of Fontainebleau. He was received with politeness, but he could accomplish nothing; Philip and his wife declined to waive anything that had been promised by the treaty; it was for France to fulfill her agreements, or stand convicted of perfidy and bad faith.[2]

But on July 9, 1746, Philip V. of Spain died suddenly of apoplexy. His succession to the throne had caused one of the greatest wars in European history, and for forty-six years he had been the king of that country; his life had been plunged in gloom and depression, his mind obscured by superstition and prejudice, his body weighed down by disease and fat; now making vows of abdication, now vowing that he would never abdicate, but always governed by his wife and his confessor, he had at last finished his long, strange, profitless career.

If his influence had been slight while he was alive,

[1] These negotiations are related in Arneth's *Geschichte Maria Theresias*. It does not appear very clearly how far these agents were authorized.

[2] *Correspondance de Louis XV. et du duc de Noailles.*

his death worked a great change in Spanish politics, for it closed the extraordinary career of Elizabeth Farnese. Ferdinand VI., the son of Philip by his first wife, succeeded him on the throne, and the step-mother had no influence over the new sovereign. She left the palace where she had reigned so absolutely and been loved so little. "I have seen many funeral processions," wrote a spectator describing her parting, "but never one that made on me so strong an impression; it seemed like a living person going to her own burial." [1]

The new king was Spanish by birth, and his mother was a Piedmontese; he was not inclined to regulate the policy of Spain to suit the taste of France. His own inclinations were not, however, of much importance. In many respects Ferdinand resembled his father; he had been reared in ignorance, his health was infirm, his temperament melancholy, and he was controlled by his wife, who was a Portuguese princess. It was Maria who succeeded to Elizabeth, rather than Ferdinand to Philip.[2]

Whether the decision was to be made by the new king or the new queen, it was certain that Spain would not exhaust her resources in advancing the fortunes of Don Philip. The Spanish army remained in the field, but it was not reinforced, Genoa was left to be captured by the Austrians, and no further efforts were made to obtain possession of the territories desired by the infante. Ferdinand felt that the French had made many conquests which they could exchange for an establishment for Louis XV.'s son-in-law, and he did not care to expose his own forces to further

[1] Vauréal to Argenson, August 6, 1746.

[2] *Erizzo*, August 13, 1746; Vauréal to king, July 11, 1746.

peril in his half-brother's behalf. It is doubtful if Spain could have done much more, even if her sovereign had been so inclined. The exertions already made had been a severe drain on a poor and ill-governed country; it was with difficulty that Elizabeth had sustained an army of twenty thousand men in Italy, and the Spanish navy was reduced to twelve ships, an unimportant factor in a war against the greatest maritime power in the world.[1]

Small as was the contribution of Spain to the allied armies, she demanded the control of their movements. The French soldiers were more numerous, their leaders had greater experience, but the Spanish insisted on the adoption of their plans, and with the docility which Louis showed to all demands from Spain, his generals were bidden to act in conformity with the wishes of their imperious allies. During most of these campaigns Don Philip himself was the Spanish commander, though officers under him must have felt that obedience was due to his rank rather than to his capacity. The prince was approaching thirty, but he displayed the intellectual sluggishness of many of his family, and seemed hardly more than a boy. The French marshal who commanded in Italy saw with amazement his superior amusing himself at hide and seek, and puss in the corner. Don Philip himself felt a certain incongruity between such amusements and his rank and age; spies were placed to inform him when the gray-haired marshal, who had seen service for forty years, approached to receive his commands,

[1] *Cor. d'Espagne, pas.*, 1744–45. The nominal size of this fleet was larger, but there was always a great discrepancy between the nominal and the effective forces.

so that he might not be surprised in the very act of crying "I spy."[1]

With inefficient leaders and divided counsels, it was not strange that no further progress was made in Italy; there was only one engagement of importance in the year 1747, and in that the French were defeated. It was not in Italy, but at Aix-la-Chapelle that the fortunes of the young prince, for whom so great efforts had been made, were to be finally decided; the victories of Marshal Saxe in Flanders secured for the infante the possessions that he was unable to conquer for himself.

[1] Conversation of Marshal Belle Isle, reported by the Duke of Luynes, *Mém.*, x. 123.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CLOSE OF THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION.

WHILE the foundation of Prussia's future greatness was secured by the treaty of Dresden, the destinies of France were affected by transactions of a very different nature. Louis XV.'s tears over Mme. de Châteauroux were soon dried, and his attention was turned to a woman who, during almost twenty years, did much to lessen the respect for the crown and to lower the position of France. It was certain that some one would be found to fill the place of Mme. de Châteauroux, and the position was coveted by all who were moved by ambition and not squeamish about virtue. Of such there was no lack. The place left vacant by Mme. de Châteauroux, wrote a courtier, was desired by all the ladies of the court.[1] Even if this statement was too sweeping, it is certain that many of them were ready to fill it, but their hopes were doomed to disappointment.

The woman who obtained the prize played so important a part in French politics that to pass her by with scanty notice would be affectation; one can no more slight Mme. de Pompadour in the history of Louis XV. than Fleury or Choiseul. The record of royal amours is usually as unimportant as it is unedifying; the frail beauty who obtains the king's favor procures titles and wealth for herself, and she influences

[1] *Souvenirs de Valfons*, 130.

the bestowal of favors and pensions upon others; she is naturally a person of much importance for her contemporaries, and of very little interest for posterity. It is far otherwise with Mme. de Pompadour: during many years she exercised on the government of France a larger influence than any other person in the kingdom; a history of her rule would be properly entitled France under Mme. de Pompadour; for a period little shorter than the ministries of Richelieu, of Mazarin, and of Fleury she held a power not far inferior to that of the famous cardinals; the stern genius of Richelieu, the extraordinary sagacity of Mazarin, the judicious mildness of Fleury, were succeeded by the petty jealousies and the feminine ambitions of a Pompadour. However lamentable were the results of her administration, she was no commonplace woman; not only was she beautiful and gifted, an intelligent patron of art, and excelling in the accomplishments which give a charm to life, but she had traits of character found in those born to rule; she was not content with the triumphs of her theatre, nor with giving her name to dresses and fashions; it was not enough that there should be Pompadour ribbons and fans and headdresses; she had the love of power, the desire to rule, the wish to leave her name to the French people as one who had done great things for the country; she had the ambition of a Catherine II. without her intellect.

Jeanne Antoinette Poisson was born in 1721.[1] Her father was a subordinate of the Paris brothers, the great public contractors; her mother, it was said, was the daughter of a butcher, a woman equally known for

[1] Mme. de Pompadour's birth is usually put in 1722, but according to the baptismal certificate she was born in 1721.

beauty and for numerous gallantries which she took no pains to conceal. The father's reputation was as checkered as that of the mother, and in 1726 he was charged with rendering false accounts in reference to the subsistence of the troops. Frauds of this nature were common in a corrupt administration; Poisson was probably as guilty as many others and perhaps no more so, but he was selected for an example and was condemned to be hanged. To escape that penalty he fled from France, and for many years he remained in exile.[1] Mme. Poisson felt no inclination to share her husband's fate, and she continued to be an admired member of what may be called the society of the city as distinguished from the more aristocratic circles of Versailles. In this could be found the wealthy government contractors, the great bankers, men famous in literature, wits, painters, and poets, and amid such surroundings the young Antoinette Poisson grew up. She soon became one of the greatest ornaments of the social world in which she moved, and in due time she was married to Lenormant d'Etioles, the nephew of a rich farmer-general, a young man possessed of much wealth and little wit. He was enamored by the charms of the beauty he had won, and she found in marriage the only thing she sought, an opportunity to indulge her tastes for luxury, for artistic enjoyment, and social prominence. It was at this period that she was described by President Hénault, a man who for long years had seen all that was most attractive in the society of the court and the town: "I have met one of the prettiest women I have ever seen, Mme. d'Etioles; she is an accomplished musician, she sings with all possible taste and gayety, and plays comedies

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, vii. 67, 68.

at Etioles in a theatre which equals the best at Paris."[1]

But the adoration of poets and farmers-general did not satisfy the ambition of this young beauty; she longed for admission to the more elevated circles which were closed to a bourgeoise, and she cherished the hope that if charms such as hers could be brought to the notice of a pleasure-loving king, he could not resist their attraction; the widow of a comedian had become the wife of Louis XIV., and the wife of a contractor could at least aspire to be the mistress of his successor.

If Mme. d'Etioles was not received at the court, she found other opportunities to bring herself to the king's notice. When Louis went to the hunt, he often encountered a young beauty coquettishly attired; now she appeared as a Diana in blue, in a rose-colored phaeton; again she was a huntress in rose, in a carriage of azure; but however she appeared, she was always bewitching.

In February, 1745, Louis met the charming Diana at a ball at the Hôtel de Ville. Mme. de Châteauroux had been dead for two months, and the gossips of the court soon began to consider the possibility of the king choosing her successor from the ranks of the bourgeoisie. The possibility became a certainty, but the beautiful huntress met with a chilling reception in the circles to which the favor of the king introduced her. This hostility was due, not to her lack of morals, but to her lack of pedigree; the conduct of the king infringed upon long established usage; if no statute prescribed the quarterings required for a royal mistress, yet when the sovereign went outside of the circles

[1] Hénault to Mme. du Deffand, July 18, 1742.

of Versailles to make his selection, the nobility felt, says the Duke of Broglie, as if this were an infringement upon their privileges. The favorite could use no phrase, could make no gesture, which indicated a lack of familiarity with the usages of the court, without exposing herself to the sneers of a crowd of hereditary courtiers. But she had arts of pleasing which enabled her to withstand all intrigues formed for her overthrow, and Louis justly declared her the most charming woman in France. In later years her health became impaired and her comeliness faded, yet she never lost her favor with Louis XV. The influence which she had gained by beauty, by wit, and by grace was retained by pandering to the vices of a man plunged in a sluggish sensuality, and was used in a manner which accounts for some of the most ignominious chapters in the history of France. But for the present Mme. de Pompadour, as she was now called, occupied herself in strengthening her hold on Louis's affections; it was not until later that she turned her attention to choosing ministers and shaping foreign policy.

While Louis was occupied with his new favorite, Marshal Saxe pursued his career of glory. It was contrary to the usages of the age to attempt important military operations in cold weather; the armies went into winter quarters, the officers returned to the pleasures of Paris and Versailles; a campaign which lasted for six months was regarded as a long one. In a treatise on the art of war, which Maurice wrote when a young man, he had disapproved of these long seasons of repose, and he now acted upon his own theories.[1] While most of his officers hastened home, he remained with the army, but to dispel any suspi-

[1] *Mes Rêveries*, ii. 30.

cions it was asserted that his infirmities rendered it impossible for him to undertake the journey to Paris. The marshal had as strong a taste for the pleasures of life as any of his subordinates, and he sought diversion during a tedious winter by indulging in his favorite sport of fighting cocks and by attending the performances at his theatre.

While Maurice was apparently absorbed in watching cocks thrust spurs into each other, and hearing pretty women sing songs of questionable propriety, he was secretly making preparations for an important movement. In January, 1746, the French forces in the Netherlands were rapidly concentrated, and by the 30th they were under the walls of Brussels. If a horde of Tartars had appeared before the city, it would hardly have caused greater surprise than the sight of the French army undertaking the siege of an important place in the dead of winter. The more unexpected the movement, so much the more easy was its success. Brussels was not strongly fortified, and the garrison was under the command of Count Kaunitz, a man who afterwards became famous as a diplomat, but had neither experience nor aptitude for the rôle of a general. Under such circumstances it was impossible to make a long resistance; the allies could not come to the relief of the town, and on February 20 Brussels surrendered, and the garrison of twelve thousand men became prisoners of war. The French loss during the siege was only about nine hundred men.[1] Fifty-two standards taken from the enemy were sent to Paris to adorn the great arches of her ancient cathedral; it was already so full of such tro-

[1] *Lettres et Mém. du Maréchal de Saxe*, t. ii.; Espagnac, ii. 156–198.

phies that it was difficult to find a place for more, and the populace dubbed Maurice the upholsterer of Notre Dame.[1] Among other spoils was the oriflamme of Francis I., which had been captured at Pavia, and after more than two centuries was now sent triumphantly back to Paris. Often as the French had waged war in the Low Countries, it was rarely that they had penetrated as far as Brussels, and though the capture of the capital had been attempted, it had never been accomplished; now the French were practically masters of the whole of the Austrian Netherlands, and there was no one who could compel them to surrender their conquests.

Nothing more could be done at present, and Maurice returned to Paris to enjoy the glory of his achievements. The victor of Fontenoy and the captor of Brussels was received with the boundless enthusiasm which the French always bestow on a successful general. Even at the barriers of the city he met intimations of the applause in store for him. The octroi on provisions entering a town, the mediæval impost which the French have never made sufficient progress in political economy to replace by less burdensome duties, was in force then as it is now, and the carriage in which Maurice rode was stopped at the gate by a subordinate to see if it contained anything subject to duty. "What do you mean by stopping the marshal," cried a superior, who recognized him. "Do you think that laurels are subject to the octroi?"

Maurice had already received practical marks of the gratitude of the sovereign whom he served so well; his offices and pensions yielded an income of three hundred thousand francs a year, and he had been granted

[1] *Lettres de Saxe*, ii. 157; *Journal de Barbier*, February, 1746.

for life the magnificent property of Chambord where he supported the pomp and state of a sovereign.[1] He now received new marks of distinction, which to a courtier would have seemed as valuable as those enormous emoluments. Louis XV. embraced him in the presence of the court, and he was admitted to the "grandes entrées," which gave him the right to view his sovereign in bed.

Maurice was little of a courtier, and the honors which he received from the public pleased him more than any entrées at Versailles. All his life he had been an enthusiastic lover of the stage; he was known to the actors and only too well known to the actresses of Paris; now he returned to receive their applause in the fullness of his glory. On the 18th of February, he attended the opera to see a representation of Armide; the hall was filled to suffocation, and as Maurice entered he was greeted by cries of "Long live Marshal Saxe," and by a prolonged applause in which all joined save the ladies, whom a strict etiquette forbade to clap their hands.[2] In the prologue of the opera was a passage, originally written for Louis XIV., in which Glory declares that all the universe must yield to the august hero whom she loves. Mlle. Metz, a famous actress of the day, had the rôle of Glory, and as she sang these words she advanced to the edge of the stage with a crown of laurels, and endeavored to present it to the marshal. Maurice was unprepared for this effu-

[1] For the amount of his pensions, see letter of Saxe, May 31, 1745, cited by Broglie.

[2] Mlle. de la Roche sur Yon, of the great Condé family, sent word to the marshal that if it were only the custom for ladies to clap their hands, she should have been the first to join in the applause of the public. *Journal de Barbier*, February, 1746.

sion and sought to decline, but enthusiastic spectators seized the crown and forced it upon him, while the opera house rang with frantic applause. "Such an honor," wrote one of the audience, "is well worth a Roman triumph. Marshal Saxe is crowned by Glory in the presence of the most brilliant audience in Europe."[1] The part of Glory, he adds, was not an unprofitable one, for the marshal afterwards sent Mlle. Metz a pair of earrings worth ten thousand livres.

Maurice delighted in such scenes, and few men would have been unaffected by them, but he did not allow coronations by Glory to delay his return to the field, where he could show that such honors were not undeserved. By April, he was again with his army, but the vigor of his operations was hampered by the instructions of the government. It was among the many anomalies of this war that the Dutch sent soldiers to fight against the French, though the two nations were nominally at peace. The treaty of Utrecht had established a barrier of fortresses for the protection of Holland, and, though these belonged to Austria, the Dutch were bound to furnish soldiers for their defense. The barrier, to obtain which so much blood had been shed, proved of as little use to Holland as the Bourbons in Spain to France; in time of peace the Dutch had no need of a barrier, and in time of war it did not keep away the French. The most of Flanders had already been conquered, and it was now said that it was time to notify the Dutch that they must cease giving aid to the enemies of France, or the French armies without more delay would carry the war into Holland itself. Such a course would have been wise, and it was desired by Maurice, but it did not accord with

[1] Barbier, iv. 132–134.

the pacific views of the minister for foreign affairs, whose voice was now most influential in Louis's councils. Maurice was accordingly instructed not to allow any pursuit of the enemy to lead him into an invasion of Dutch soil; the allies prudently kept near the boundary, and the campaign of 1746 was mostly occupied in capturing the cities which the Austrians still held in Flanders. Mons, Charleroi, Namur, and Antwerp were taken with little difficulty, but further advance was checked, not by any serious obstacles in the way, but by the instructions of the government.

As he could not furnish his officers with much fighting, Maurice sought to supply other pleasures which were agreeable to him as well as to his subordinates. These campaigns of Maurice de Saxe in the Low Countries illustrate the manner in which war was carried on at its best under the old régime: when glory and pleasure went hand in hand, when the life of the camp was as gay as Versailles, with the additional excitement of fighting, when officers gambled and reveled all night and went to face death with reckless gallantry in the morning. Maurice professed to act upon principle in trying to make army life interesting. French officers, he said, must be diverted, and when there was no fighting to do, he must supply something else. Accordingly a company of comedians was engaged, under the leadership of Favart, who was well known at Paris as a director and as an author, and a regular series of representations was given at headquarters. "Your comedy," Maurice wrote him, "I do not regard simply as an object of amusement; it enters into my political views and into my plan of military operations." [1] In

[1] *Mém. de Favart*, Int. 22.

addition to such considerations, Favart had a good troupe and he had a pretty wife, and both of these were agreeable to a general who no more allowed his occupations to interfere with his pleasures than his pleasures to interfere with his duties.

The campaign of 1746 was not to end without something of more importance than the successful performance of comedies. Late in September, Prince Charles crossed the Meuse and encamped near the banks of the stream. The position of the Austrian commander was singularly ill chosen, for his army was almost cut in two by deep ravines, while a retreat could only be made under great difficulties. Maurice hoped, therefore, that by a successful attack he could annihilate the enemy's forces, as they were hemmed in by the hills and the river, and could not escape pursuit by a speedy retreat within the Dutch boundary. He at once resolved to seize the opportunity, but with habitual secrecy he kept this decision to himself; he never held councils of war, never asked advice from others, and never revealed his plans until he was ready for action.

No one expected a battle; it was now late in the season; the officers were anticipating a speedy return to Paris, and the men were looking forward to winter quarters. The decision of the commander-in-chief was conveyed to his subordinates in a manner novel in the annals of warfare, but characteristic of Maurice de Saxe. On the 10th of October, he said to Favart, "To-morrow I shall give battle; no one knows of this; I wish you to announce it at the close of the representation this evening in some couplets which you can prepare for the occasion." [1] In the evening the theatre was crowded as usual with officers of all ranks, who

[1] *Mém. de Favart*, 25–27, Théâtre de Maurice de Saxe.

watched the performance with satisfaction. At the close Chantilly, a pretty and popular actress, advanced to the front of the stage, and sang to a martial air some lines which informed the audience that on the morrow the theatre was to be closed, for to-morrow was to be a day of battle, a day of glory; but on the following evening they were bidden to return and enjoy the fruits of their victory in listening to the performance of the "Jolly Lovers" and "Cythera Besieged." At first the officers hardly knew whether to accept the comedienne as the mouthpiece of their commander, but they soon discovered that she spoke with authority, and if the announcement of a battle excited surprise, it was received with enthusiasm. So complete was the confidence in Maurice's genius that no one doubted the result; the actors hired horses that they might watch the engagement, and the performance of "Cythera Besieged" on the day after the victory was regarded as certain as if it had been advertised at the Comedie Française in Paris.

These anticipations were not disappointed, but rain and fog so delayed the movements of the French that not until afternoon did the battle fairly begin. Though it was stubbornly contested, Maurice succeeded in driving the English and Dutch from their intrenchments, while the Austrians took little part in the engagement. Unfortunately for his plans the day was short, and by the time the enemy was dislodged it was already dark; two hours more of daylight, said Maurice, and few of them could have escaped.[1] It was impossible to pursue the fugitives in the darkness, and they made their retreat without serious difficulty. The allies lost some eight thousand

[1] *Mém. d'Espagnac*, ii. 309.

men, and the French had the glory of defeating them, but except for the moral effect, for the satisfaction which victory gave the French, for the recrimination and bickering it excited among their opponents, each of whom accused the other of having faint-hearted soldiers and inefficient generals, the results of the battle of Roucoux were not important.[1] On the following night the officers listened to the representation of the "Jolly Lovers," and greeted Maurice with enthusiastic applause when he made his appearance at the play.

Nearly two years passed before peace was made. The French continued their uninterrupted progress in the Austrian Low Countries, and with little difficulty could have overrun Holland; they were superior in numbers, and against Maurice de Saxe the allies had no chance of success even with equal forces. In 1747, they were again defeated in a great battle at Lawfeldt; the English soldiers fought with bravery but without success, the Austrians conducted themselves with the listlessness they often showed during these campaigns. Louis was present with his army at the battle, and was as just in his criticisms on the enemy's conduct as he was probably sincere in attributing the result to supernatural aid. This great victory, he wrote the queen, was due to the marked protection of the Virgin; the battle was fought on the fête of the Visitation, and it was waged against heretics alone, for the Austrians, after their usual fashion, contented themselves with acting as benevolent spectators of the engagement.[2]

There were many reasons for the listless conduct of the Austrians; the long war had exhausted the re-

[1] See report and letters of Saxe, *Mém. d'Espagnac*, etc.

[2] *Mém. de Luynes*, July 5, 1747.

sources of Maria Theresa, and, even with the English subsidies, it was with difficulty she could keep her armies in the field. The campaigns in the Low Countries had also little interest for her; these provinces were far removed, and by the treaty of Utrecht the most important fortresses were put in the charge of the Dutch. The maritime powers believed this barrier was required for the protection of Holland, but Maria Theresa regarded it as far less important to Austria than Silesia, or even Milan; if the maritime powers considered the Austrian Low Countries of vital importance, she thought it was their business to defend them. There was another reason which justified Maria Theresa in her indifference. While the French had conquered all of Flanders, they constantly declared they would not keep a foot of it. Similar claims of disinterestedness had, indeed, been made before by French statesmen at the beginnings of wars and forgotten before their close; but such was the character of the men then in the French councils, that the queen felt she could rely on their professions. Argenson had already begun negotiations for peace, and his first announcement was that France desired no conquests, she sought nothing for herself. Whether Maurice de Saxe took more or fewer cities seemed, therefore, unimportant, for they would all be returned when the war was over.

Even if the politicians would make no use of his victories, Maurice continued to win them. At last he obtained permission to advance into Holland, and in the spring of 1747, he entered Zealand; he captured the Dutch fortresses without trouble, and soon made himself master of the entire course of the Scheldt. In July, he defeated the Duke of Cumberland at Law-

feldt, and his favorite lieutenant, Lowendahl, laid siege to Berg op Zoom. This fortress was one of the strongest in the country, and was regarded as the key of Holland, but its strength was not sufficient to save it, and on September 16, the town surrendered. The news was received with dismay at Amsterdam and the great cities of Holland; the Dutch had long been making war on France with the comfortable feeling that they themselves were safe from invasion, and they were amazed and terrified when the French at last ventured to cross their boundaries.

While the French arms were successful on land, the English held the supremacy of the sea. It is not an overstatement that on the sea the English were twice as strong as the French at the beginning of the war, and this preponderance was largely increased before its close. The inferiority of the French navy was due to neglect and not to necessity. France exceeded England in population, the national revenues were larger, the facilities for shipbuilding were as good. But the attention of the government was concentrated on the army; remiss as were all branches of the administration, the department of the navy suffered most from neglect. In 1747, the minister of the marine estimated that with less than forty million livres it was possible so to increase the strength of the navy that it would be sufficient to protect the colonies and the foreign interests of France, and unless such an effort was made, he justly prophesied the loss of the French possessions in America.[1] This sum was no more than Mme. de Pompadour received from the treasury to satisfy her taste for luxury and pomp, but the lavish expenditures of the court were not curtailed,

[1] *Mém.* of Maurepas, November 22, 1747.

the strength of the navy was not increased, and both America and India were lost.

The English navy won few great victories during this war, for the engagement at Toulon in 1744, the only one in which a large number of ships took part, resulted in a drawn battle. But in India the English fleet hampered the progress of Dupleix; in the West it assisted the New England colonists and helped in the capture of Louisburg, the most important military possession of the French in America. The year 1747 was marked by successes for the English which, while no one of them was very important, were in the aggregate disastrous to their adversaries. The French, with inferior forces, encountered Anson off Cape Finisterre and Hawke off Belle Isle, and in each engagement they suffered severely. Since the war began the French had lost twenty-four ships of the line, twelve hundred cannon, and over ten thousand men, and such losses were fatal to a navy that was feeble at the beginning.[1] The disasters suffered by the merchant marine were still more severe; there were not sufficient war-ships to protect convoys, and it was not strange that many fell into the hands of the enemy. Though French privateers did much injury to English commerce, the losses of the English bore a much smaller proportion to their entire merchant shipping.

While the English were victorious in the West, the French met with successes which might have proved of importance in the East. In 1746, Madras was captured, and the efforts of Dupleix, had they been seconded by his government, would have established the ascendency of France in India. The condition of affairs in this great field received no attention at Ver-

[1] List published in *Mém. de Luynes*, viii. 420.

sailles; the news of the capture of Madras reached France seven months afterwards, and was followed by vague rumors of quarrels between Dupleix and Bourdonnais, but there does not seem to have been a man in France, and certainly there was not a man in the royal councils, who regarded the possibility of establishing an Eastern empire as of the least importance; the Indian question received no attention during the war, and was not deemed worthy of discussion in the negotiations for peace.[1]

Little heed was given to any extension of the French frontiers, or to the future of the French possessions in India and America; the sole object, apparently, for which the war was waged during the last three years was a satisfactory principality in Italy for the son of Philip V. Argenson justly said that the king regarded his conquests in Flanders as valuable only for securing the interests of the infante.[2]

In 1746, a conference was held at Breda, under the auspices of Argenson, in the hope of bringing this long war to a close, but it met with the ill success of all his diplomatic enterprises. So meek was the attitude of France, that it encouraged the representatives of Spain and Holland to make such extravagant demands that even the French ministers would not discuss them; the meeting was regarded by diplomats as little more than a farce, and soon came to an end.[3]

[1] How vague and uncertain were the reports as to affairs in India may be seen in the memoirs of Luynes, who was well informed, and who noted down daily the news received at the court.

[2] Argenson to Vaureal, *Cor. d'Esp.*, 1745.

[3] These negotiations, which were of no practical importance, can be followed in the *Cor. de Breda* at the *Aff. Etr.* Argenson gives his account in his *Mémoires*, t. iv. 331–365.

The failure of the conference was accompanied by the disgrace of the minister who had organized it. Argenson had made no more mistakes than most of the ministers of Louis XV., but he had no social graces, no adroitness in intrigue, no skill in amusing the king or gaining the confidence of the mistress; the virtues of his character were as disastrous to his favor as the infirmities of his judgment; he had no friends at court to protect him from the results of his failures, and no diplomatic successes as the fruits of an eccentric policy, and in January, 1747, he was dismissed from office.[1] His place was taken by Puisieulx, a man who was inferior to his predecessor in intelligence, and not superior to him in judgment.

The negotiations which had proved abortive at Breda were again undertaken, and this time with better result. An accident of the campaign furnished an opportunity for renewing the endeavors for peace. At the battle of Lawfeldt the English General Ligonier was taken prisoner. He was French by birth, and was one of the many Huguenots who used their talents against the country which had driven them from its boundaries. Ligonier spoke French as his mother tongue, he was a distinguished soldier, an agreeable companion, and he received every courtesy from his captors. He supped with the king, and in the freedom of social intercourse there was an opportunity for suggestions which could not have been made in formal dispatches. "Is it not better to

[1] A long and bitter attack by the Duke of Noailles helped to destroy any confidence that the king had in Argenson, but the unfortunate minister had a still more dangerous enemy in Marshal Saxe, who felt that Argenson's cloudy philanthropy had tied his hands and checked his success in the Low Countries.

think seriously about peace," said Louis, "than to be killing so many brave men?" "Why do not you English make peace?" the French suggested; "we desire no conquests, no new possessions; let everything captured on either side be restored; give the Spanish infante a reasonable settlement and we will be content." [1]

These suggestions were transmitted by Ligonier to the Duke of Cumberland, and found in him a willing listener. The duke had abandoned the hope of gaining victories from Maurice de Saxe; as there seemed little prospect of glory by carrying on war, he was now ready to secure the credit of negotiating an honorable peace.[2] Cumberland was the favorite son of George II., and his desires had a strong influence in moderating the warlike zeal of his bellicose father, while the English ministers, for the most part, were glad to see any way of ending a long and an unsuccessful war. "We might have had last year a better peace than we shall be able to obtain this," wrote the English prime minister, "and this a better than we shall get the next." [3] "I do not at present see the resources for carrying on the war or mending our condition," said the chancellor, "and it will grow worse and worse."

Saxe and Cumberland were not able to follow the example of Boufflers and Portland half a century before, and arrange terms of peace between their

[1] The letters in which Saxe gave formal expression to some of these views are published in *Geheimnisse des Sächsischen Cabinets*, i. 232–234.

[2] "We must do the best we can to get out of the scrape before we are too far gone," he wrote Sandwich in April, 1748.

[3] Pelham to Walpole, August 14, 1747, cited by Coxe.

countries without diplomatic formalities, but as a result of these endeavors a congress was agreed on to which all the combatants were bidden. Aix-la-Chapelle was selected as the place of its meeting, and thither, in the early part of 1748, the representatives of the great powers of Europe began to make their way. France sent the Count of St. Severin, an Italian by birth, and in the acuteness of his mind, as well as in his freedom from scruple, a worthy disciple of the Macchiavelian school.[1] Lord Sandwich appeared for England, and the empress queen sent Count Kaunitz, the most acute and the most able of Austrian statesmen.

Yet though so many famous diplomats were hastening to Aix-la-Chapelle, few believed that peace would be made. Maria Theresa saw little prospect of obtaining conditions that would be satisfactory to her pride, the English were loath to offend their colonists by surrendering Louisburg, and Spain was sure to be discontented, no matter what advantages she might gain.

The hopes of the allies were encouraged also by the entry of a new actor on the scene, and it seemed possible that the unbroken success of the French armies under Marshal Saxe might be checked by opponents who would appear for the first time on the battlefields of western Europe.[2] After years of diplomatic efforts and of changing counsels, the Empress Elizabeth at last consented to furnish thirty thousand

[1] "C'est une quintessence de finesses italiennes francisées." Kaunitz to Ulfeld, June 31, 1748.

[2] Eighteen thousand Russians were sent to assist Austria in 1735, but active hostilities had ceased before their arrival at the Rhine.

Russian soldiers, for whom she was to be liberally paid by the maritime powers. Such bargains were often made with the petty German princes, who were always ready to sell their subjects to any purchaser, but it was a new thing for the remote and almost unknown empire of Russia to take part in the quarrels of western states. In February, 1748, the Russians crossed the Polish frontier and started on their long march of one thousand miles from the Vistula to the fields of Flanders. The countries through which they had to pass viewed with apprehension the sojourn of a great body of men who were regarded as barbarians, and who were in truth not far removed from barbarism, and while their allies hoped for important results from these Russian reinforcements, yet all watched with curiosity, not unmingled with uneasiness, the conduct and military qualities of a race which was making its entry into the politics and warfare of civilized nations.

There was no opportunity to gratify this curiosity. The Russian hordes advanced with great deliberation, and Marshal Saxe was not the man to wait for them. In April, 1748, he marched rapidly on Maestricht, and, before any steps could be taken to hinder him, the town was invested, and its surrender, with the ten thousand men forming its garrison, was only a question of time. This news came like a thunderbolt upon the negotiators at Aix-la-Chapelle. Maestricht was one of the most important of the frontier fortresses; its capture would leave a large part of Holland open to invasion, and with little means of checking the enemy except the dolorous resort of cutting the dykes and turning the land into sea; before the usual wrangles over diplomatic formalities could be adjusted,

Maurice could conquer the Seven Provinces. Peace will be made at Maestricht, he had said, and so it proved; victory at Maestricht brought peace at Aix. The sound of the cannon could easily be heard at Aix-la-Chapelle. "I do not know," wrote Maurice, "whether this agreeable music will incline the listeners to thoughts of peace, or will excite their warlike ardor."[1] Its influence proved pacific.

Yet another embarrassment inclined the allies to agree on terms. England and Holland had promised to defray the expenses of the Russian contingent, but the Dutch could no longer support war as in the days of Louis XIV.; they suddenly confessed that their resources were exhausted, and applied to the English for the loan of a million pounds. Pelham was already appalled at the cost of the war, and now the additional expense of thirty thousand men was to be thrown on England alone. "We fight all and we pay all," he said, "but we are beaten and we shall be broke."

The position taken by the allies became more conciliatory, and the course of the negotiations indicated the great political change that was to be consummated a few years later. Instead of Austria and the maritime powers acting together at Aix-la-Chapelle in presenting their claims against France, the common enemy, the terms asked by the English and Dutch were often those which were most disagreeable to Maria Theresa. As a natural result, on one night St. Severin would be listening to offers from Sandwich, and on the next he would be engaged in secret conferences with Kaunitz; each party sought to induce the representative of France to agree on a pro-

[1] Saxe to St. Severin, April 21, 1748, *Aff. Etr.*

gramme agreeable to itself, and was willing to make liberal concessions at the expense of its allies. When such was the diplomatic position, when all of Austrian Flanders was held by the French, when the victorious army of Maurice de Saxe was before Maestricht, and Holland was defenseless, the French statesmen of a former day would have utilized the situation to obtain important advantages for their country. This was not done, and the blame rests, not on St. Severin, who was a sagacious, if not always a scrupulous diplomat, but on those whose instructions he was bound to obey. It was a famous declaration of Louis XV. that he did not make peace as a merchant, and never did king utter a more foolish saying. To scorn material advantages for his own country may have seemed to courtiers at Versailles an exhibition of aristocratic elevation of feeling, but such a policy did not excite the admiration of the greatest general or the greatest sovereign in Europe.

Saxe felt a natural irritation at seeing the results of his four years of victory frittered away. "It is worth while," he wrote of the proposition to restore Flanders without compensation, "to be at some trouble to acquire a province like this, which furnishes a magnificent port, millions of inhabitants, and an impregnable barrier. Such are my views. I don't understand your infernal politics, but I know that the king of Prussia took Silesia and kept it, and I wish we might imitate him." [1]

Frederick had no personal interest in what France could gain, but, as a political artist, he seems to have felt genuine regret that men who had such manifest advantages on their side should not know how to use

[1] Maurice to Maurepas, *Lettres de Saxe*, v. 269.

them. "The men who govern France," he wrote, "are idiots and ignoramuses not to know better how to profit by the situation." The opinion of Frederick on this, as on many occasions, has become the verdict of history.

It had, however, been decided at Versailles that France should ask for no advantages of any nature, political or commercial, and that the war should be carried on solely for the benefit of others. St. Severin asked only that Louisburg should be returned in exchange for Madras, and said that France would surrender the Low Countries in return for an establishment in Italy for Louis XV.'s son-in-law, the infante Philip of Spain. Terms so reasonable excited little demur from Austria or England, but on other questions the two nations held very different views. It was under English pressure that Maria Theresa had signed the treaty of Worms, by which she granted Pavia and territories along the Po to the king of Sardinia, and under the same influence she had consented to cede Silesia to Prussia. But Sardinia, said the queen, and with some degree of justice, had not fulfilled her agreements, the Bourbons had not been driven out of Italy, Naples had not been obtained for Austria; as the work was not done, the wages were not earned, and the provinces to which Charles Emmanuel had no just right could properly be used to satisfy the demands of the Spanish infante. Still more bitterly did the empress queen protest against any ratification of Frederick's possession of Silesia. "Although the queen of Hungary," so ran the secret articles prepared by Austria, "was far removed from any thought of violating the treaty of Dresden if the king of Prussia conformed strictly to it," yet it was insisted

that no guarantee of Silesia should be given at Aix-la-Chapelle.[1]

The French were in position to accede to these views. The treaty of Worms formed a combination hostile to them, the treaty of Dresden was made by Frederick when he deserted their alliance; they could properly say that they had no voice in either of them, and it did not concern France whether their terms were observed or violated.

But the desires of Maria Theresa went further than this, and she contemplated the possibility of a new combination among the European powers. The alliance of France and Austria in 1756 has been regarded as a sudden caprice, a bizarre political change, the whim of a mistress, flattered by a sovereign. Certainly the alliance with Austria would not have been made if Mme. de Pompadour had disapproved of it, but it was no sudden change; such an alliance had been proposed and considered, half favored and half disapproved, for ten years before it was at last consummated; not only had politicians suggested it, but the course of events, political sympathies and political interests, from the time that Silesia was ceded to Frederick, had all tended to a new political combination, in which Prussia and England should be on the one side and France and Austria on the other.

From the first Frederick had seen that England would be a more valuable ally for him than France;

[1] The articles which Count Loos was authorized to submit are given in Vitzthum's *Geheimnisse des Sächsischen Cabinets*. The second secret article of the proposed treaty stated that the queen of Hungary had no thoughts of violating the treaty of Dresden, "en cas que s. m. le roi de Prusse s'y tienne exactement."

he hated George II., but he despised Louis XV., and as allies he preferred the English to the French; the English could furnish him with money, they had no ambition for territorial aggrandizement on the Continent, they professed the same religious faith as his people, a Protestant alliance would be popular in England and would be faithfully observed. It was only after the failure of his negotiations with England in 1741, that Frederick threw himself into the arms of France. Notwithstanding the first outcry at his unscrupulous seizure of Silesia, English opinion soon became favorable to him, and he owed it to their intercession that Maria Theresa acceded to the treaties of Breslau and Dresden.

While Frederick appreciated the benefits he received from his nominal enemies, Maria Theresa became constantly more irritated at the concessions which she was forced to make by her nominal allies, and, weary of the English, she now sought the friendship of France.[1] These tendencies of political drift became apparent during the war of the Austrian Succession. Several times had Maria Theresa endeavored to disarm the hostility of France, to induce the French, if they would not join her against Frederick, at least to allow Austria and Prussia to fight out their battles unaided. Such plans had been hinted at in the negotiations in 1745, and were repelled by Argenson; they now again found utterance. The position taken by her English allies at Aix-la-Chapelle increased the discontent of the empress queen. "The English system appears clearly," she wrote; "it consists in increasing the greatness of Prussia and Sar-

[1] "Meine Feinde werden mir bessere Bedingungen einräumen als meine Freunde," she said.

dinia at our expense." And because she believed her interests were sacrificed by her allies, she strove the more to establish friendly relations with France. "The French court as well as ourselves," she wrote again, "should draw lessons from the past. If thus far France has shown herself hostile to the interests of our House, this feeling has imposed incalculable sacrifices on the two nations, and others have got the profit. . . . France must see that England and Prussia are working to weaken the great Catholic powers, and that our common interests require measures to defeat their projects." [1]

Politicians like Kaunitz and Maria Theresa could grasp the possibility of new combinations and were ready to form them, but Louis XV. and his advisers had the timidity and the respect for established traditions which are found in weak minds; they received these suggestions with apprehension, not wishing wholly to reject them, not daring wholly to accept them. Unlike Argenson, Puisieulx was not a worshiper at the shrine of Frederick, but if he did not love the king he greatly feared him, and he was in constant apprehension during the negotiations at Aix of doing something that would give offense to Prussia.[2] He decided, therefore, to guarantee the possession of Silesia, not because he was interested in Frederick's acquisitions, but because he knew the king would be very angry and very abusive if this was not done.

While Kaunitz was trying to win the French to an alliance with Austria, Lord Sandwich was also

[1] Maria Theresa to Kaunitz, April, 1748.

[2] "Quoique nous passions sur cet article," he wrote in his distress, "le roi des Prusses en aura connaissance et nous en saura toujours mauvais gré; c'est ce qu'il faudrait éviter."

engaged in conferences with the French representative, but the terms demanded by the English were very different from those proposed by the Austrians. Maria Theresa deemed it of the utmost importance that the treaties of Dresden and Worms should be passed by in silence, but the English insisted upon a solemn ratification of Frederick's title to Silesia and of the grants made to Charles Emmanuel. St. Severin at last decided to accept the propositions of the maritime powers, and on the 30th of April, 1748, articles were signed between England, France, and Holland, which formed the basis of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. By them France agreed to surrender Madras and all her conquests in the Low Countries, in return for which Louisburg was given up by the English. This was the only advantage the French obtained by the treaty. To the Infante Don Philip, the son of Philip V. and Elizabeth Farnese, and the son-in-law of Louis XV., the duchies of Parma, Piacenza, and Guastella were ceded; the king of Sardinia kept what was secured to him by the treaty of Worms, with the exception of Piacenza; Frederick was guaranteed the possession of Silesia; the monopoly of the slave trade with the Spanish colonies, which had been interrupted by the war, was secured to the English for the unexpired term. Another article was possibly not of great importance, but was so humiliating that it is amazing the French should have submitted to it. By the treaty of Utrecht, made at the darkest period of the fortunes of France, Louis XIV., to obtain peace from England, had consented to dismantle Dunkirk, so that city could no longer serve as a place of refuge for privateers or ships of war. It is not often that a nation submits the fortification of its

cities to the dictation of a foreign power: such terms might be imposed by Russia on Poland, and the condition of France in 1711 could explain so humiliating an agreement; but in 1748 France was victorious, she held Flanders in her grasp and Holland at her mercy; yet the same condition was submitted to: Dunkirk was again to be dismantled towards the sea, as a special favor the French were permitted to fortify it on the land side; the city could offer no resistance to a naval power, but was allowed to defend itself against an enemy on land. As Pelham wrote his brother, the preliminaries were so advantageous to England it was hard to believe the French would agree to them.[1]

If the French had wished to profit by their advantages, said Lord Chesterfield, who was an acute observer, the English would have been lost, and he sought in vain to account for their moderation.[2]

The articles thus agreed upon were presented to the other powers, but with the intimation that no modifications would be allowed, and there was nothing to do but to accept them. Not unnaturally they excited a storm of disapproval from those for whom peace had been made without their being consulted. The Spanish were dissatisfied with the provision made for Don Philip, and incensed at the commercial privileges granted the English; the king of Sardinia was discontented because Piacenza was given to Spain, but most of all Maria Theresa denounced the treaty, the

[1] Pelham to Newcastle, October 4, 1748.

[2] "The French were under no necessity to lay down their arms, while the allies were in the greatest distress, and in no condition to resist their victorious progress." *Observations*, etc., H. Walpole, the former ambassador to France.

conduct of her allies in betraying her, the conduct of the French in agreeing on terms with England instead of with Austria.

However loudly the representatives of the other powers might complain, there was nothing to do but accept the situation. The nations aggrieved had no common interest, and no one of them alone was in condition to continue the war. Months were spent in diplomatic wrangles, but no substantial change was made in the conditions agreed upon. One after another the different parties yielded to the inevitable: on the 18th of October, 1748, the formal treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed by the representatives of France and the maritime powers; two days later it was signed by the Spanish ambassador, and in November both Austria and Sardinia joined in an instrument, to the terms of which they had practically consented some time before.[1]

A war of seven years had ended, and of those who took part in it no one had gained except Prussia and Sardinia; the pride of Elizabeth Farnese was gratified to have her son become a sovereign, though his possessions were smaller than she had hoped; Holland escaped the ruin with which she was threatened; the English had the satisfaction of seeing their hereditary

[1] From the French side, the negotiations of Aix-la-Chapelle can best be followed in *Cor. de Breda* and *d'Aix-la-Chapelle, Aff. Etr.* In Arneth's *Maria Theresia*, the congress is reviewed from the Austrian standpoint. Frederick's views are found in *Pol. Cor.*, t. vi. Vitzthum's *Geheimnisse des Sächischen Cabinets* contains some documents not before published. Also Beers's *Friede von Aachen.* The Duc de Broglie's *Paix d'Aix-la-Chapelle* contains a full and accurate account of the congress. Many of Pelham's letters are found in Coxe's *Pelham Administration.* The published correspondence of Chesterfield is also of interest.

enemy abandon her conquests, and allow her navy to sink into a condition which insured England's success in future contests; France gained nothing in strength or glory by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. "As stupid as the peace" became a familiar saying at Paris, and expressed the judgment of the French people.

An incident of no great importance increased the apparent humiliation of this treaty in the eyes of the French. One of the conditions of the treaty of Utrecht had been renewed, and the French bound themselves to expel from their boundaries any member of the Pretender's family. Charles Edward was then in Paris, fresh from his romantic achievements in Scotland; dissipation had not yet made him contemptible, and a young prince, brave, handsome, and unfortunate, excited the admiration of the people and was sure of their sympathy. The order was given him to leave France, but Charles Edward believed that the government would not enforce an unpopular condition, and he refused to obey. The French ministers were unwilling to be trifled with, and the prince was arrested as he was entering the opera; he struggled to escape, and was put forcibly in a carriage, his arms were tied, — it was said indeed they were bound with a silken cord, — and he was thus conveyed to Vincennes. There he remained in close confinement until, weary of prison life, he consented to leave the country.[1] Good faith required this action by the ministry, but the expulsion of an unfortunate prince at the dictation of a foreign power did not appeal to the popular imagination nor excite popular pride. During the scuffle, a servant of the Princess of Talmont, the mistress of

[1] See *Journal de Barbier* for 1748, and *Mém. d'Argenson*, *Mém. de Luynes.*

Charles Edward, had been taken into custody, and with pleasing impertinence she wrote to one of the ministers: "The arrest of the prince gives the final lustre to the king's laurels, but as the imprisonment of my lackey will add nothing to them, be good enough to order his release."

As the only reward for French sacrifices and victories, the son of an infirm descendant of Louis XIV. became Duke of Parma, and took his place among the petty Italian sovereigns. For half a century the dukes of Parma were counted among Bourbon princes, but it would be impossible to state any advantage, political or commercial, which France derived from their rule; the son-in-law of Louis XV. was a petty sovereign holding his court at Parma, instead of a Spanish prince residing at Madrid; to the French nation this was of no more importance than the conquests in Asia of Nadir Shah. In 1796, the soldiers of the French republic captured Parma, its duke was reduced to the condition of a nominal sovereign, and this was the end of the establishment of a Bourbon prince, to obtain which France had sacrificed thousands of lives and wasted millions of money.

Frederick the Great has given his opinion as to the condition in which the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle left the combatants. "This pacification," he wrote, "resembled rather a truce, in which all the parties profited by a moment of repose to seek new alliances, in order to be in better condition again to take up arms."

There were many indications by which one could foresee the nature of those new combinations. We have already spoken of the rancor of Maria Theresa towards England and her repeated suggestions of a close union with France. The desires of her great

rival were equally manifest. During the war Frederick had often shown a wish to ally himself more closely with England, and the reasons for this were apparent even to his enemies. "His natural interest," wrote the Saxon chief minister in 1746, "is to attach himself to the maritime powers."[1] The same belief was held at Vienna, and it was held still more firmly by Frederick himself.[2] "Wait till peace is made," he said, "and I have no longer any precautions to take with France; then I shall be ready to join in a firm and cordial alliance with the maritime powers." "The system of Europe is changed," wrote that far-sighted statesman eight years before the outbreak of the next great war. "I shall soon be found on good footing with Great Britain, while there is great lack of harmony and discontent between the queen of Hungary and England."[3] Such were the results of the war of the Austrian Succession.

[1] Count Brühl to Maurice de Saxe, April 4, 1746, published in *Geheimnisse des Sächischen Cabinets.*

[2] See letters of Tercier to Puisieulx, 1748, *Cor. d'Aix-la-Chapelle.*

[3] *Pol. Cor.*, vi. 122, 126, 130, 146.

CHAPTER IX.

DUPLEIX.

While great armies marched and fought in Germany and the Low Countries with small results, the fate of a country seven times as large as France, and containing a population exceeding that of all western Europe, was decided by the obscure combats of a few hundred men. In that contest the French were finally worsted, and like most of the misfortunes that befell them in the eighteenth century, their defeat was due to the inefficiency of their government; the listless apathy of Louis XV. cost France an empire in the Indies.

Her failure to hold her place in India and America has been charged to the French character; the French, it is said, were ill adapted to be colonists, they could not deal with strange peoples; wedded to the gayety of Parisian life or the tranquillity of provincial life, they were not fitted for painful existence among half civilized tribes, in distant lands and under strange skies. The study of French colonization in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries shows this theory to be the reverse of the truth. No nation equaled the French in the skill with which they ingratiated themselves with the native populations; they were soon on the best of terms with chiefs of the Five Nations, and with subahdars and nawabs of the Carnatic; they excited admiration and did not arouse prejudices; in their contests with the English, the French, so long

as they had any prospect of success, usually had the natives for their allies. Not only did they deal adroitly with peoples of a lower grade of civilization, but it was by French pioneers that plans were developed for bringing under European control the vast interior of North America and the swarming populations of southern India. While La Salle and Tonty pushed the exploration and the colonization of the Mississippi valley, Dupleix conceived the policy by which Europeans could rule at Delhi and Aurungabad. These great schemes were carried into effect by the English, but this was not the fault of the Frenchmen who represented their country in India and America. It was at Versailles that Canada and Hindustan were lost to France, and not by the waters of the St. Lawrence or the shores of the Indian Ocean.

No European government took a more active interest in the development of colonial empire than France in the seventeenth century. "There is no country so well situated as France," wrote Richelieu, "none so well provided with all that is required to make her mistress of the seas."[1] The cardinal gave much attention to strengthening the navy and to organizing commercial companies, and, in 1642, a charter was granted to the Company of the Indies. Little, however, seems to have been done towards the development of Eastern trade; the troubles of the Fronde checked any business activity, and it was not until internal order was established under Louis XIV. that attention was again given to foreign enterprises.

Colbert shared Richelieu's desire that France should become a colonial power, and he devoted his untiring energy to that end. Among his other undertakings

[1] *Mém. de Richelieu*, ed. Michaud, xxi. 438.

was the organization of a new company of the Indies, to which a charter was granted in 1664. The success of the English and Dutch Companies in the East stimulated Colbert's desire that the French should share in such gains. The new French Company had the full benefit of royal patronage. Its foundation was celebrated by Charpentier, who, in well-rounded phrases, told of the glories of the East and of the wealth in store for those who traded there. Favored by the king, launched with academical orations, and receiving the constant attention of the ministry, yet, perhaps, as a result of this illustrious protection, the company lacked the spirit of individual enterprise; its members never learned to rely on their own efforts because it was so easy to ask aid from the government.

The king subscribed largely to its stock, and strong pressure was exercised to induce others to follow his example. The courtier who wished to please, the official who hoped for promotion, did well to have his name appear among the subscribers for India stock. Some of these courtly subscribers proved remiss in their payments, but the company was soon equipped for its new enterprise, and commenced a trade which it was to carry on for more than a century, and which, if France had been better governed, might have resulted in the French Company of the Indies becoming the ruler of India. It was with no thought of such a destiny that it was organized. The desire of Colbert was to extend French trade and to increase French wealth; any expectation of conquering remote eastern kingdoms, whose population was known to be enormous and whose wealth was believed to be boundless, would have been regarded as chimerical. "You

are to have no views in India," said the instructions to agents in 1673, "except commerce; consider only what you can buy cheap and sell dear." Yet Colbert was not unmindful of the extension of French influence which might result, and the charter gave to the company the sovereignty of all lands which it should conquer, subject only to the authority of the king.

Notwithstanding the zealous aid which it received, it was long before the operations of the Company of the Indies were of large importance. The assistance of the government was not an unmixed blessing; in return for aid, the company had to submit to supervision and to the evils of bureaucracy. It received a monopoly of the trade between India and France. Such exclusive rights were granted to similar enterprises in every country; it was an age of privilege; the spirit of monopoly prevailed in every vocation, and belief in the efficacy of free competition was unknown. When the barbers of Paris were guarded by law against competition, it was not strange that like protection should be demanded for a corporation that was to carry on trade with a distant part of the world. The monopoly of trade which the company demanded and obtained proved injurious to its interests; it checked immigration and the development of individual enterprises, which would ultimately have increased its revenues far more than the additional sou it could demand for a pound of spice or a yard of cotton because it met with no competitors in the market.

In 1674, Pondicherri was founded, about eighty miles south of Madras, and it became the chief port of the company in India.[1] But its trade was small

[1] It was in 1674 that the governor, François Martin, established himself at Pondicherri. It was then an unimportant village.

and its growth was slow. The Dutch held an important place in the commerce with India, and looked with jealousy upon any competitors; in 1693, they laid siege to Pondicherri; the company was unable to defend the town, and it soon surrendered. In 1697, by the treaty of Ryswick, it was restored to its former owners, and the company again began its painful endeavors to earn dividends for its stockholders by trading with the Indies.

The war of the Spanish Succession completed the ruin of the enterprise. In the financial distress that prevailed at home there was little market for eastern luxuries; the ships which ventured on the long journey from France to India ran great risk of capture by English and Dutch cruisers; the company continued to drag on a sickly existence which neither made its stockholders richer nor France greater. In 1719, the corporation founded by Colbert was dissolved, and its property and privileges were turned over to the Mississippi Company, then at the height of its power and apparent prosperity. This change was of large importance; the Indian trade had long been in the hands of an infirm corporation, burdened with debt, conducted without vigor, and administered without ability; the new Company of the Indies had the wealth of France at its command, and the energy of Law to develop its interests and its commerce.

The great increase of trade which might have resulted was checked by the bankruptcy of the Mississippi Company and the failure of Law's system, but the franchises of the former Company of the Indies were spared; it contrived to carry on business, and it preserved, as one of the fruits of Law's management, a monopoly of the sale of tobacco, which proved its

surest source of income. Its trade with the East increased and assumed considerable proportions. In 1725, the sales of eastern commodities in France amounted to about eight million livres, and to ten million in 1750. The sale of goods imported from China amounted to two million livres yearly, and increased under Dupleix to three million. The capital of the company exceeded one hundred and thirty-five million livres, and during all this period moderate dividends were paid upon the stock.[1]

Such was the condition of the French Company of the Indies, when a man of bold and original genius entered its service and changed its fortunes. Joseph François Dupleix was born in 1697, and was the son of a rich farmer-general. When seventeen years old he embarked on a St. Malo trading-ship; he made several voyages to America and India, and acquired a taste for adventures in strange lands. In 1720, his father obtained for him a position in the employ of the East India Company. The father, though rich, was penurious; he provided his son with a scanty outfit for such a journey, and directed that no money should be wasted in buying fine linen. The future governor-general of India set sail with a beggarly assortment of stockings and shirts, but he took with him a bass viol, an instrument on which he loved to perform, and from which he sought consolation during all the vicissitudes that fortune had in store for him.

Thus equipped he embarked for Pondicherri, and commenced his career in the Indies. After ten years of assiduous service he was promoted to be director of Chandarnagar, a trading-post of the company in

[1] These figures are given in D'Aubigny, *Choiseul et la France d'outre mer*, and in the appendices of the *Mémoire pour Dupleix*.

Bengal, and there he had an opportunity to exhibit his talents as an administrator. Chandarnagar was a sleepy and unimportant place; three times a year a ship arrived from Europe, and occasionally some caravan from the interior awakened it into temporary animation. "What I am expected to do," wrote Dupleix, "is to reëstablish a colony which lacks everything, and from which indolence and poverty have banished commerce." But however unpromising the field, the new director was equal to the task. Like other agents of the company, Dupleix had traded actively on his own account, and his good judgment had rendered these ventures largely profitable. He now devoted to the development of Chandarnagar his fortune and his genius. The boats of the company engaged only in voyages between France and India; but Dupleix saw a large field in the trade that could be carried on between India and the rest of Asia. Soon seventy-two vessels were employed in carrying and exchanging wares from China to the Arabian Gulf, while, in the interior, commercial relations were extended as far as Thibet. This increase in commerce made Chandarnagar one of the most important European posts in the East. In 1740, it had six thousand houses and a population of thirty thousand people; land sold at high prices, two thousand artisans were employed in making linen cloths, there were numerous churches, mosques, and pagodas for the spiritual needs of the motley population. In this rapid development of business, Dupleix gained the favor of his superiors by the only services they could appreciate, a steady increase in the revenues of the company. In 1740, they manifested their approval by appointing him governor-general in India.

This transferred him to Pondicherri, and the citizens of Chandarnagar were in despair; the prosperity which had come so rapidly they knew was the work of Dupleix, and if he were removed, they feared a return to the commercial stagnation that had so long been their lot.

It was only by promising to remain with them for a few months longer that Dupleix could in any degree console their grief, and during that time he married a woman who proved of singular service in the projects he was soon to undertake. His wife belonged to a family of Portuguese Creoles; she was of great beauty, and of equal intelligence and ambition. Born in India, she was familiar with the languages and even the dialects of the country; she could communicate with rajahs and nawabs in their own tongue, and in the style and with the metaphors which were dear to the eastern heart. While Dupleix was governor-general, his wife might have been regarded as his minister for foreign affairs, and he could have found no one better fitted for the place. Jan Begum, the Princess Jeanne, became as well known to the courts of Delhi and Hyderabad as Dupleix himself.

In January, 1742, the new governor-general left his disconsolate Chandarnagarians, and went to Pondicherri, the capital of French India, there to assume the duties of his office.[1] Most of his predecessors had been content if they could report that the commerce of the company showed no decline, but the years Dupleix had spent in the East convinced him that there was an opportunity for France of infinitely more importance than shipping a few more pounds of spice to Paris, or selling a few more knives and bales of cloth

[1] *Journal of Rangappoulle*, 15.

to the inhabitants of the Carnatic.[1] In a high degree Dupleix possessed the rarest quality of genius, the faculty of conceiving what is new to human experience, of devising schemes of polity and of government for which history can afford no precedent. To his contemporaries the empire of the Great Mogul seemed a stupendous power; Dupleix first realized that it was possible for a handful of Europeans to control its destinies. While others talked with bated breath of the rulers of Delhi and Arcot and Moorshedabad, of the thousands of men who formed their armies, of the millions of money which filled their treasuries, he saw that a few hundred European soldiers, with a fit man to lead them, could scatter those great armies and administer those well-filled treasuries. Not only did the distracted condition of the Indian empire and the imbecility of its rulers render possible the ascendency of a race of higher intelligence and higher civilization, but no western nation was better prepared than France to extend its authority over those vast regions. The influence of Portugal and Holland in the East had waned with the decline of their power in Europe, and they were in no condition to increase it. The English East India Company had been longer in the field, and, as a commercial enterprise, had been more successful than its French rival, but the directors in London, like those in Paris, were dreaming of dividends and not of conquests; they had as yet no thought of replacing trading-posts by subject principalities. The possessions of the French in India were not inferior in importance or in the advantages of their situation to those then held by the English. Above all, in

[1] It is just to say that Dupleix's immediate predecessor, Delas, had considerably increased French influence in the Carnatic.

Dupleix himself, the French had a man who in his knowledge of eastern character, in his ability to control eastern potentates, and in his conception of a wise eastern policy, was equaled by no other European.

The first enterprise which he undertook was to convert Pondicherri into a well-fortified town, that should no longer be defenseless if some neighboring prince or the British authorities saw fit to attack it. Work had hardly begun when the news reached India that the war of the Austrian Succession had commenced. The contest which was rapidly involving all Europe would probably extend to the distant shores of India, and if the French were to maintain their position in the East, they needed soldiers by the banks of the Ganges as well as by the Rhine or the Danube. But the possibility of a conflict, in which their posts might be destroyed and their ships be burned, terrified the directors of the India Company out of their wits; they wrote Dupleix to suspend all work on the fortifications, and to reduce his expenses by at least one half.[1] On this occasion, as on many other occasions, the governor-general declined to adopt the narrow views of his employers, and supplied from his own pocket the money which the company was unable to furnish. He now advanced half a million livres and completed the fortifications of the town. The directors were not disturbed by this disobedience to their orders; the fact that they were not asked to raise money for the work reconciled them to its accomplishment, and in due time they wrote that the prompt completion of the fortifications of Pondicherri had given them much pleasure.[2] So fluctuating were the

[1] Letter of September 18, 1743.

[2] Letter of November 30, 1746.

counsels of the company at Paris that the directors were as apt to commend disobedience as obedience, and their representatives naturally respected their orders just so far as they agreed with their own views.

In the mean time the war had actually reached India, and the governor of Madras threatened to besiege Pondicherri. Dupleix had long before written for reinforcements, but none had been sent; deserted by his government, he endeavored to use his influence in India to protect the interests of France. With few exceptions the native rulers were more friendly towards the French than towards their English rivals, and Dupleix had in a marked degree won their confidence. He now turned to the nawab of the Carnatic and asked him for aid against any attack by the English company. "I am myself," wrote Dupleix, "an officer and a vassal of the Great Mogul, and will you allow the English to drive me from India?" The nawab responded to this appeal, and forbade any attack upon Pondicherri; the English were in no position to defy the native authorities, and did not venture to proceed in violation of their orders.

The situation was still full of peril, and it was impossible to impress native rulers with the power of France, if her representatives were obliged to ask their aid to escape annihilation by the English. "If we do not receive succor during the course of this year," Dupleix wrote in 1746, "the company may regard its establishments in India as lost. One year will destroy the fruits of a quarter of a century."

At last the government consented to take some steps to preserve its eastern colonies. The number of troops sent was small in comparison with the thou-

sands of lives and the millions of money that were wasted to obtain the imperial crown for the Elector of Bavaria, but if Dupleix had been allowed to control its use, even a small force might have changed the future of India. On the 8th of July, 1746, a fleet of nine ships and some three thousand men anchored in the bay of Pondicherri, after an obstinate conflict with the English squadron, which had endeavored to repel them. La Bourdonnais, to whom the command of the fleet was intrusted, was an officer of energy and distinction; he had gained laurels both on sea and land, and he had rendered valuable service as governor of the Isle of France. But the government, which had at last given some aid to its Indian possessions, had done much to neutralize its value. The fleet was sent to assist Dupleix, but its movements were to be decided by La Bourdonnais; the instructions were conflicting and ambiguous; they had been prepared years before, and apparently forbade the capture of any establishment of the English, with the purpose of adding it to the French possessions.[1]

The relations between Dupleix and La Bourdonnais soon became far from cordial, and the fault seems to have been with the latter.[2] Dupleix and the council at Pondicherri were agreed that the great object to be attained was the conquest of Madras and the overthrow of the British power on the Coromandel coast. It was difficult to see why the fleet should have come at all, unless it were to assure the ascendency of the

[1] Instructions à M. La Bourdonnais, signed by Orry.

[2] In his correspondence with La Bourdonnais, Dupleix always treated him with great courtesy and consideration, and it is hard to believe that his conduct was as overbearing as was afterwards charged.

French, and to secure them against future attacks from their English rivals. But whether from pique, or from indecision, or from timidity, La Bourdonnais delayed and vacillated and did nothing. The last of August arrived, and he then began to say that the fleet must speedily return in order to escape the danger of encountering a monsoon on the Indian coast. Not until September, after repeated appeals from Dupleix and orders from the council, was the siege of Madras at last undertaken. It proved an easy enterprise; the English had few soldiers, and the town was ill fortified; after a siege of six days, Madras surrendered.

The capture of the capital of the British possessions in India produced a profound impression; the power of the rivals of France on the Coromandel coast seemed overthrown; the way was clear for obtaining that ascendency over the native rulers which was the object of Dupleix's policy.

But the fruits of the victory were not what he hoped; Madras, which might have secured the preëminence of France in the Carnatic, was nearly wrested from him by the strange conduct of the French admiral, and was at last surrendered with indifference by the authorities at Versailles. The surrender of Madras to La Bourdonnais had been unconditional.[1] On the day that he entered the city he wrote Dupleix, "I have the English at my discretion." There were three

[1] The articles of the capitulation show this. They contain a provision that if a ransom of the city should be agreed upon, then the prisoners of war might serve against the natives, etc. There was no article which provided that the city should be ransomed. Colonel Malleson, the best English authority, proves that the reproach so constantly made against Dupleix of acting in bad faith is without foundation.

courses, he said, that might be pursued: the city could be destroyed, it could be made a French colony, or it could be ransomed.[1] There had been talk of ransoming the city, and this La Bourdonnais now recommended. Such a measure was directly contrary to the interests of France; it converted a conquest which might assure French ascendency into a mere buccaneering expedition, it left the English power unimpaired, and the proposed ransom was not even sure to be paid, for the governor of Madras had no money, and could only give bills running through years, the acceptance and payment of which by the English authorities might well be doubted. No sooner had La Bourdonnais announced his purpose, than Dupleix remonstrated with all the vigor of which he was capable. "In the name of God, of your children and your wife," he wrote, "be persuaded by what I say. Spare not an enemy who has no purpose but to reduce us to extremity. Profit by this victory for the glory of your king and for the interests of the nation."[2]

To such remonstrances was added a formal notice from the council of Pondicherri that a capitulation on the terms now proposed would not be ratified.[3] But this opposition only served to strengthen La Bourdonnais in his purpose. He had captured the city, he replied, and he had the right to fix the terms on which it could be ransomed; he had given his word to the English and must keep it, and he would not be dictated to by the civilians of Pondicherri.[4] A delega-

[1] Letter of September 23, 1746.
[2] Dupleix to La Bourdonnais, September 29, 1746.
[3] Letter of September 28, 1746.
[4] Letter to Dupleix, October 1, 1746.

tion was sent from that city to forbid his ransoming Madras, and he ordered them to be shut up in jail. In violation of all remonstrances, and a month after the city had surrendered, he signed a formal capitulation by which Madras was to be given back to the English in the January following, and he received bills from its governor for four hundred thousand pounds, which was the sum agreed upon for the ransom of the town. The French authorities had given notice that they would not respect this capitulation, and they did not. It is hard to see how they can be charged with bad faith, when their quarrel with La Bourdonnais was a public scandal, and every white man in Madras knew that the French commander was proceeding in violation of their orders.[1] To a large extent, the conduct of La Bourdonnais in disregarding advice to which he should have listened, and in violating orders which he should have obeyed, was due to caprice and impatience of control; but it cannot be doubted that it was also influenced by more corrupt motives. He himself was to receive a present of forty thousand pounds, and some or all of this sum was paid to him.[2] Such gifts were often bestowed on successful warriors in India. It is possible that if La Bourdonnais had no personal interest,

[1] La Bourdonnais's account of this affair is found in his memoirs.

[2] The evidence establishing this fact seems beyond question. The most convincing, perhaps, is given by Malleson in his valuable work, *The French in India*, and he regards the charge as established. If any faith can be put in the testimony of witnesses preserved at Pondicherri, they confirm the authorities cited by Colonel Malleson. La Bourdonnais denied that he received any money, but his denial cannot be considered as disposing of the charge.

he would still have thought it wiser to accept a ransom than to endeavor to hold Madras; but until human nature changes, the man who has a great pecuniary interest in a certain policy will be specially alert in discovering its advantages for the public.

There was now an open quarrel between the French authorities and their officer. "This is the capitulation I have signed," said La Bourdonnais; "it is for you to carry it out." "It was made without authority," they replied, "and we will not execute it." Eight days after signing the capitulation, La Bourdonnais gathered together his ships and sailed away from India in a rage, leaving Dupleix to his fate. With the exception of two small detachments, amounting in all to about five hundred men, the governor-general received no more help from France during the war of the Austrian Succession.

He was soon obliged to make the utmost use of the scanty resources at his command. To avert the hostility of the Nawab of the Carnatic, Dupleix had promised that Madras should be turned over to him. It was a promise which he felt in no haste to execute, and, at all events, he resolved to destroy the fortifications of the place before he surrendered it, even to a friendly prince. But the nawab wanted Madras fortified and he wanted it at once, and without more delay he laid siege to the city. This act of hostility, Dupleix thought, relieved him from his promise, and he resolved to brave the power of the ruler of the Carnatic.

Though the great western companies had been trading in India for a century and a half, there had been few encounters in the field of battle between European and Indian soldiers. The companies had been there

as merchants, they had avoided hostilities with the native princes, they had taken no part in the internal dissensions of the country. The enormous difference that existed between disciplined troops and these unwieldy hordes of Asiatic warriors was first shown in the battles between the French soldiery of Dupleix and the forces of Anwarooden.

The governor-general had instituted a system by which some assistance could be furnished the few hundred European soldiers sent out by the company and the government. Though undisciplined Indians were of little avail against the troops and arms of the West, yet these same men, subjected to regular drill, taught to use firearms with precision, and to recognize the authority of trained officers, might possess a steadiness and an efficiency in the field unknown to the masses of their countrymen, whose only idea of a battle was a disorderly charge, usually followed by a precipitate flight. Accordingly, Dupleix gave constant attention to the organization and discipline of bodies of native troops. The results repaid his efforts. The sepoys, as they were called, soon became soldiers not very inferior to their European associates.

The entire force which Dupleix could command was not over one thousand European soldiers and two thousand sepoys, and of these only one thousand were stationed at Madras, while the nawab at once sent an army of ten thousand men to besiege the city. For the first time the military systems of India and of the West were to meet in serious contest, and the result showed the immeasurable superiority of the latter. The besiegers endeavored to cut off the water supply of Madras, and the French, four hundred strong, with two cannon, marched against them. A great body of

native cavalry advanced, intending to overwhelm their opponents by numbers. The French opened fire with their cannon, and the rapidity and the accuracy of the discharge threw the natives into confusion; the great body of cavalry hesitated and, at the fourth discharge, broke in confusion; the victory of the French was won without the loss of a man.[1]

A more decisive encounter soon followed. A force of some six hundred French and sepoys advanced to the relief of Madras, under the command of an engineer named Paradis. He was a bold and skillful officer, and the men had unbounded confidence in him. On the 4th of November, 1746, they reached the army of the nawab, ten thousand strong, drawn up on the bank of a river near St. Thomé, and provided with a few cannon. The native artillerymen deemed themselves expert when they could discharge a cannon once in fifteen minutes, and Paradis resolved to attack them without delay. "Hell or Paradise!" shouted the men, as they forded the river and charged an army twenty times larger than their own. A well-directed volley broke the Indian ranks, and they fell back as the French advanced. Their pursuers followed, the fugitives were huddled together in confusion, and the French poured volley after volley into the thick masses of men. The victory became a slaughter; the defeated general fled, tearing his garments in his distress; after a few hours nothing remained of his army but scattered fugitives.

The war was ended, the army of the nawab annihilated, and the French had not lost fifty men. The completeness of the victory was, perhaps, a revelation to Dupleix himself, and it carried consternation to the

[1] *Relation de Dupleix.*

heart of every native ruler in India. French soldiers seemed to them as terrible as did those of Cortes to the followers of Montezuma. They had regarded the French as merchants, trading by their sufferance; a few years before, when these foreigners had sought to obtain the good will of some nawab or subahdar, he gazed contemptuously on their offerings and did not deign to answer their compliments.[1] They now discovered that France was a power whose hostility was too dangerous to be encountered, and whose friendship could secure success against any rivals. The victory of St. Thomé prepared the way for the intervention of western nations in the internal affairs of India, which might have made that country a tributary of France and did make it a tributary of Great Britain.

Victorious over the nawab, Dupleix resolved to attack Fort St. David, the last post of any importance which the English held in the Carnatic. He had now an advantage in numbers, he had the prestige of success, and if the native princes took any part, they would be sure to enlist in the cause which seemed the stronger. But the rules of seniority gave the command of the French army besieging Fort St. David to a general who was infirm and incompetent. The siege was unsuccessful, subsequent attacks were equally unfortunate, and suddenly the whole aspect of affairs was changed by the arrival of an English fleet. The government of George II. did not view its foreign possessions with the indifference of Louis XV., and the largest fleet which had been seen on the Indian Sea now appeared, with instructions to capture Pondicherri and overthrow French ascendency in the Carnatic. In September, 1748, the siege of Pondicherri

[1] *Mém. pour Dupleix*, 56, and letter of Bussy.

began, and success seemed assured; only the indomitable energy of the French governor saved the town. Paradis, his ablest officer, was mortally wounded, and an explosion of gunpowder killed or disabled a hundred of the little garrison and compelled the abandonment of part of the defenses. Provisions were scanty, the soldiers were worn out, the natives were terrified by the dangers of the siege, and thought the end had come whenever a shell burst among them. But Dupleix and Jan Begum excited the defenders of the town to an heroic resistance; the English commander displayed little military skill, the autumn rains came on, the season for the monsoon had arrived, and on the 17th of October the siege was raised.[1] The native rulers, who for a while had hesitated which cause to espouse, were again convinced that the French were too powerful for their adversaries. No man knew better than Dupleix how to utilize the moral effects of such a victory; special messengers were sent at once to the most powerful Indian princes to announce that the English had been unable to capture Pondicherri; the princes replied with costly presents, and with the bestowal of sounding titles upon the invincible Frenchman.

While Dupleix was receiving letters of congratulation from the Nawab of Arcot, the Nizam of Hyderabad, and the Emperor of Delhi, the fatal intelligence came that his own government had thrown away his

[1] *Relation du siège, Journal of Rangappoulle.* This journal, kept by a native of Pondicherri in Tamoul, contains much that is curious. It is bitterly hostile to Mme. Dupleix, but the complaints are evidently colored by religious prejudices and some personal grievances. For Dupleix the writer expresses the admiration which the governor always excited among the natives.

conquests and done all in its power to check the growing ascendency of France in the East Indies. In the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, Louis XV. verified his famous assertion that he did not make peace as a merchant but as a king. Nothing certainly could have been more courteous than his conduct towards other nations, and nothing could have been more foolish. The victories which Maurice de Saxe had won in Flanders well entitled the French to demand some compensation for seven years of warfare; they asked nothing and they got nothing. It is doubtful if the English would have been strenuous for the restoration of Madras, because the importance of these eastern possessions was then realized by no one except Dupleix. But the French ministers at once consented to its surrender. They were so eager to abandon any advantages that had been won, that Dupleix was ordered to deliver everything captured from the English without waiting for them to evacuate any French territory they held. There was indeed little for them to give up.[1]

The surrender of Madras was a bitter disappointment for Dupleix, and it was perhaps a fatal blow to the success of his projects. The English were again reëstablished in the Carnatic; they were restored to a position where they could oppose with equal forces any aggrandizement of the French. Moreover the surrender of Madras was regarded by the native authorities as a proof that in Europe the English were stronger than the French; these untutored potentates could not comprehend the principles which led Louis XV. to regard territorial gains with polite indifference; they reasoned that if the French gave up Ma-

[1] Letter of October 22, 1748.

dras, it was because they were not strong enough to hold it. Dupleix had to begin his schemes anew for the extension of French influence, yet with such sagacity did he pursue them that their final failure was due not to him but to his government.

The battle of St. Thomé had shown the immeasurable superiority of disciplined soldiers over the tumultuous hordes that formed the armies of the Indian states; it was natural that these should seek an alliance with the invincible strangers, and Dupleix was ready to respond to any such appeals. He knew that by judicious intervention, rather than by conquest, French ascendency could be gradually but surely established, and he did not have to wait long before putting this policy into execution.

In 1749, Nizam ool Moolk, subahdar of the Dekkan, died, having reached, as was said, the ripe age of one hundred and four. By his will, he left his government to a grandson, most unfitly called Mozuffer Jung, or the invincible, and he disinherited his son Nazir Jung.[1]

In the distracted condition of Indian politics the wills of dead princes counted for little; Nazir seized the treasury of the Dekkan, obtained control of the army, and Mozuffer found himself a fugitive without money or followers. In character he resembled most of the Indian princes who were reared in the harem and trained to indolence and debauchery: he was listless, feeble, and timid, unfit to lead an army or govern a state. These qualities did not make him

[1] Nizam left four other sons, but they were not regarded as possible successors. Strictly he had no right to say who should succeed to his office, for the appointment belonged to the Emperor of Delhi.

any the less acceptable to the powerful allies who now espoused his cause.

Chunda Sahib, a man of some ability and an enthusiastic admirer of the French, aspired to be Nawab of the Carnatic. The Subahdar of the Dekkan was nominally overlord of the Carnatic with the right to nominate the nawab, and Chunda resolved to give his assistance to the despoiled Mozuffer. The title of Mozuffer was recognized by the court of Delhi; nominally this was much, and practically it was nothing. By the advice of Chunda he now took a step of much more importance, for he applied to Dupleix to assist him in the enforcement of his rights. The French governor-general asked for no better opportunity. Mozuffer had a legal title and a pliant character; he was an ideal candidate for ruler of the Dekkan.

Dupleix did not ask for instructions from his company, because he knew the officers would be unfavorable to his project; he at once declared himself the ally of Mozuffer, and sent four hundred French and twelve hundred sepoys to support his claims. Mozuffer had never seen European troops, and when he first beheld this paltry force he was plunged in despair. He soon discovered that quality counted for more than quantity. The French attacked the army of Anwarooden, Nawab of the Carnatic, and the ally of Nazir Jung. The battle was a repetition of that of St. Thomé. The forces of the nawab, twenty thousand strong, with two hundred elephants and over two hundred cannon, were encamped upon a mountain at Amboor. Though their position was a strong one, an attempt was at once made to storm it. The native auxiliaries of Mozuffer soon fell back, but the French continued their advance and scaled the parapet which

defended the camp; the nawab was killed and his army scattered. At the sight of this success, Mozuffer's distrust was succeeded by a blind confidence. "With five hundred of these men," he cried, "I would march to Delhi and encounter the Great Mogul himself." He was proclaimed Subahdar of the Dekkan on the field of battle, and he visited Pondicherri in great pomp to present thanks to Dupleix for his assistance.

The Dekkan was not yet conquered, and Nazir Jung, alarmed by the gravity of the situation, now advanced into the Carnatic with an enormous horde of followers, estimated at three hundred thousand men. With them was a little body of six hundred English troops under the command of Major Lawrence, who were worth more in battle than this innumerable multitude. Nazir's enemies were now alarmed and discouraged. An attempt to capture Trichinopoly was unsuccessful; there was a mutiny among the French troops, and they retreated to Pondicherri. With the mutability of the eastern temperament, Mozuffer now despaired of success, and, receiving some promises of favorable treatment, he mounted an elephant, fled from the camp of his allies, and surrendered himself to Nazir Jung. The promise was kept as such promises were kept in the East: Mozuffer was at once put in chains, and might anticipate the usual fate of defeated sovereigns in India, to be murdered whenever it suited the pleasure of his conqueror.

Dupleix was never more energetic than when fortune seemed adverse; he punished the mutinous officers, restored the discipline of his little army, and directed a night attack upon the forces of Nazir Jung's lieutenant. It was not difficult to surprise an enemy who took no precautions, for the custom of

Indian soldiers was to eat a hearty supper and then smoke opium until they were plunged into a profound sleep.[1] The French penetrated into their camp and killed some twelve hundred men with a loss of only three of their own party. The loss of a few hundred men was unimportant, but the moral effect of this nocturnal assault was great, and the soldiers of Nazir were terrified by opponents who pursued them by night as well as by day. He himself did nothing to restore what little discipline they ever had. The English were discontented and retired to Fort St. David; an insignificant night assault had changed the whole aspect of the war.[2]

In warfare between Indian princes the gain of a battle often proved of little permanent importance. It was regarded by the victor as an occasion for unlimited loot and license; while he was caressing the new inmates of his harem and admiring the additional diamonds of his crown, the fruits of the victory were lost. The unfortunate Nazir had to deal with enemies of a different sort. They followed up their success by routing the army of his ally, Mahomet Ali, and then at once proceeded to lay siege to Girgee, the strongest place in the Carnatic. Girgee had long been regarded as impregnable; it was surrounded by a wall three miles in circuit, it was situated between mountains, and protected by citadels, the approaches to which were so steep as to be almost impassable. Ten thousand men defended this place, which was now attacked by a little body of hardly a thousand. But the assailants knew how to aim their guns, and were not disturbed by the tumultuous discharges of weapons

[1] Orme is my authority for this statement.

[2] *Mém.* of Colonel Lawrence, and *Mss. Bib. Nat.*

fired at random, and they were commanded by Bussy, the ablest officer the French ever sent to India. The priest pronounced his blessing on the little army, and then discharged his pistol towards the enemy. At this signal, the soldiers at once rushed to storm the town, and before sundown Girgee was in their possession. The citadels were still held by the natives. At four in the morning the moon set, and in the darkness which followed the French climbed up the steep ascents, and by daybreak the French flag floated in a town into which no foreign soldier had before entered. Of all the victories won by the French, none produced a greater effect than the capture of Girgee. The place had defied the most famous of eastern warriors at the head of armies of hundreds of thousands of men, and soldiers, who had captured it in a night, had indeed proved their invincibility. The fruits of the victory were of a nature peculiar to eastern civilization: a number of the most powerful supporters of Nazir informed Dupleix of their readiness to desert a failing cause, and offered to carry their treason into effect as soon as an opportunity opened.

In December, 1750, the French attacked the army under the command of Nazir Jung. He soon recognized the signs of treachery among his adherents, and, giving orders to cut off the head of Mozuffer without delay, he drove his elephants furiously towards the Nawab of Kudda. As he approached, the nawab shot him dead. The executioner of Mozuffer knew of the plot, and had judiciously waited for the result before obeying his orders. The announcement of Nazir's death decided his action; instead of beheading Mozuffer, he saluted him as his sovereign; his chains were struck off, he mounted the elephant of the late ruler,

the great vassals of the Dekkan crowded about him to pay their reverence, and the head of the unfortunate Nazir was cut off and presented to him. Half an hour before, Mozuffer had been sitting in fetters, waiting the blow of the headsman; now he was the acknowledged ruler of thirty-five million people; so rapid were the changes in the political kaleidoscope of India.

It was fitting that the installation of the new ruler should take place in the presence of the man to whom he owed his fortune, and on the 31st of December, 1750, Mozuffer Jung made his solemn entry into Pondicherri. The day was auspicious for the great ceremonial; the sun and sky of India were never more brilliant. The subahdar was mounted on an elephant of enormous size, and by him floated his standard, a black flag, on which were emblazoned a sun and a crescent; twenty-four elephants followed carrying his generals; ten thousand horsemen acted as escort, each holding his sabre in his hand; over twenty-seven hundred standards of every variety and device marked the dignity of as many great officials; at the end of the long procession, twelve elephants carried the women of his family, shut up in inclosed towers to protect them from the public gaze, and guarded by five thousand arquebusiers. The cortége was met by Dupleix, who from principle indulged in a splendor which equaled that of the native rulers. He knew well that the trappings of state had their influence on the eastern mind, and he never neglected them. He was now attended by a great body of guards; the little army of French and sepoys followed, proud in the recollection of the brilliant victories they had won; two elephants carried the standard of France and that of the

viceroy of the Emperor of Delhi, the dignity which Dupleix held. As Dupleix reached the tent erected for the occasion, the firing of the French artillery was so furious that some of the Hindu nobles were observed to be shaking with terror. A throne had been placed for the subahdar; as he mounted it he bade Dupleix ascend and sit by his side. The new ruler of the Dekkan was then solemnly installed in his office; thirty nawabs and fifty rajahs from his extensive dominions were present to swear allegiance. When this was ended Mozuffer turned to Dupleix and said that his future conduct as a sovereign should be guided by his advice; not even a favor would be granted without his approval, and he prayed for the continuance of his friendship; he declared that the French people he regarded as his own, and he put himself and his family under the protection of the great king beyond the water. He proved this to be no idle form of words by the gifts which he then bestowed. To the company was given in sovereignty Masulipatam and other districts containing a large population, and yielding a revenue estimated at four hundred thousand rupees. Next were announced the honors intended for Dupleix, the representative of France, the king-maker of India. He was invested with the dress marking the highest dignity of the court of Delhi; he received the rank of a captain of seven thousand horse; he was granted the privilege of carrying the ensign of the red fish, an honor which yielded to no other the Great Mogul could bestow; the fortress of Valdaur and its dependencies, producing a revenue of one hundred thousand rupees, were given to him individually, for himself and his heirs; and last and most important, in the name of the king of kings,

who sat upon the peacock throne, Mozuffer proclaimed Dupleix nawab of all the territory that extended from the Kistna to Cape Comorin; he was made governor of states almost as great as the kingdom of France, inhabited by millions of people, yielding a vast revenue, fruitful in all the products which grow in the rich soil of India. The lad who had left France twenty years before, with a scanty outfit, to seek his fortune in strange lands, was now the ruler of dominions more wealthy and more populous than the domains of many a European monarch.

Dupleix received these honors in a manner that increased the admiration with which he was regarded. He had not engaged in this war, he said, to conquer kingdoms, but to obey the orders of the Great Mogul whose vassal he was; he would retain this title of Nawab of the Carnatic, but he asked that the government of that great district with all its emoluments should be bestowed upon his faithful ally, Chunda Sahib. The subahdar consented to this magnanimous abnegation, and the Hindus gazed with awe on the superior being who won and gave away kingdoms, who had overthrown mighty rulers, and now refused the emoluments of one of the greatest offices in India, in order to bestow them upon a follower.[1]

The triumph of Mozuffer Jung was the triumph of French influence in the Dekkan as well as in the Carnatic. The new subahdar asked that a body of French soldiers should accompany him to his own provinces under the command of some fit officer, by whose counsel he could profit. This was exactly what Dupleix desired; the whole country from the Narbada to Cape

[1] Full accounts of this ceremonial are found in various letters written at the time by French officers and residents.

Comorin would now be controlled in the interests of France, and would be really tributary to the French throne. There was also a man eminently fitted for the position of confidential adviser of the subahdar. Bussy had distinguished himself in the late war against Nazir Jung; superior to Dupleix in military talent, he was hardly inferior to him in skill in dealing with the native princes, and he was an enthusiastic advocate of the policy of the governor-general. There was but one objection to his selection, and though it could not have been foreseen, it proved disastrous. It took him far away from the Carnatic, and no other French officer in India developed any talent as a general; in the future contests in the peninsula, the defeat of the French troops was due to the incapacity of their commanders. Bussy was the only man who might perhaps have contended successfully against the genius of Clive.

For the present the star of Dupleix's fortune was in the ascendant. He founded a city on the spot where Nazir had met defeat and death, and it was called Dupleix Futteh-abad, the place of the victory of Dupleix. His enemies criticised this and many other of his acts, as dictated by an overweening arrogance and vanity. The criticism seems hardly just when we consider the people with whom he had to deal. He knew well the effect of display on the Oriental mind; the governor who appeared arrayed in magnificent costumes, surrounded by an imposing guard, after whom cities were named, before whom nawabs and rajahs prostrated themselves, was far more impressive to the Hindu population than some plainly dressed French official, who should stay quietly in his office, disdaining titles and pomp.

Mozuffer now started to take possession of his government, accompanied by three hundred French soldiers and eighteen hundred sepoys, under the command of Bussy. Mozuffer had little opportunity to enjoy the position which he had gained after so many vicissitudes. On his march to the Dekkan a quarrel arose between the subahdar and some of his rajahs. Mozuffer ordered a body of soldiers to attack the offenders, and in the skirmish which followed he was pierced by a javelin and fell dead. For a moment the plans of the French seemed hopelessly compromised, but Bussy was master of the situation. Nominally, it was for the Mogul at Delhi to fill Mozuffer's place, and choose the man who should govern the Dekkan as his representative. This right of appointment had long been only a fiction; when the subahdar died, the office was seized by the one of his kinsmen who was most prompt and adroit in obtaining the support of the army and of the great nobles. A disputed succession now seemed inevitable, and, had it not been for the French, the Dekkan would have been plunged in civil war. The ascendency which Dupleix had obtained was strikingly shown at this crisis. The claims of the rival candidates were at once advanced; the widow of Mozuffer asked that her son should succeed his father as subahdar; three brothers of Nazir Jung had been held in custody, but they were now released, and their friends prepared to support their pretensions. With one accord the rival claimants and their adherents turned to the representative of France to decide between them, and the sovereign of thirty-five million Hindus was selected by a young French officer of thirty-two. Bussy heard the claims of the contesting parties, and he considered under which candidate order

and tranquillity could best be maintained. Mozuffer Jung had been the ally of France, but his son was a child; Nazir Jung had been overthrown by France, but his brothers now asked for the protection of Dupleix and promised fidelity.[1] Under such circumstances Bussy decided that the fittest candidate was Salabut Jung, the oldest of the three brothers. The Hindu nobles, the army, the vast population of the Dekkan, submissively accepted the ruler selected for them, and the choice was ratified by Dupleix. The form of a nomination by the court of Delhi was still adhered to, and an imperial decree was produced which designated Salabut as viceroy of the Great Mogul in the Dekkan. It was said that the instrument was a forgery, and for any practical purposes it was immaterial whether it was genuine or apocryphal; a word from the French general was enough to transform Salabut from a captive to the sovereign of a great country.[2]

It was with good reason that Bussy expected to exercise the same influence over the new sovereign that he had possessed with Mozuffer; it was to the French that Salabut owed his promotion, it was by French arms that his rivals could be overthrown. He was, moreover, a prince of feeble character and destitute of experience, whose life had been divided between hunting and the harem, and he was a puppet in the hands of a resolute man; the country was governed in the name of Salabut and by the will of Bussy; he was the mayor of the palace of Aurungabad; for eight years the Dekkan could be regarded as a province administered by a French proconsul.

[1] *Relation de Kerjean.*

[2] In these transactions in the Dekkan I have followed the report sent to Argenson by Kerjean, Bussy's lieutenant.

With the assistance of his allies, Salabut was able to repel the Mahrattas and his other enemies, and to enjoy a tranquillity not often found in the countries which acknowledged the nominal authority of the Mogul. The subahdar was a man of infirm purpose, and Bussy kept a vigilant watch lest some native adviser should make him forget the benefits of foreign aid, and lure him into an attempt to throw off foreign dependence. The little French army was stationed in the citadel which commanded Aurungabad. They were there as the auxiliaries of Salabut and to serve him in his wars, but the nominal ally was the real master. A rigid discipline averted the danger of a foreign occupation becoming odious to the population. No soldier could leave the fortress without the written permission of the commander; drunkenness and quarrels with the inhabitants were strictly forbidden. A soldier helped himself to an orange from a tree, and the gardener made complaint to the general. Bussy fixed the price of the orange at one hundred rupees, and ordered the soldier to pay this sum on the spot. Marauding at such a price had no charms.[1]

In his own conduct Bussy followed the example of Dupleix. Courteous with those of every degree, he maintained a state which impressed the natives with his greatness. When the public were admitted to gaze upon him, they found him surrounded by his officers and seated upon an elevated chair, on which were emblazoned the arms of the king of France. His table was served with magnificent plate; when he attended a review or procession, he rode on an elephant, preceded by a troop of native poets and

[1] *Relation de Kerjean.*

musicians, singing the exploits and the glory of the French.[1]

Such pomp was partly for political effect, but it was also agreeable to Bussy's tastes; he used his place, as did Dupleix and Clive, to gain great wealth for himself, and he was not above profiting by the princely donations which were offered to a successful general in India. When Salabut found himself established in his capital, he rewarded his allies with royal liberality, and it was said that the share of the French commander was one hundred thousand pounds. Such practices were universal; but if Bussy accepted wagon-loads of gold and baskets of jewels from grateful subahdars and nawabs, he never allowed his desire for wealth to interfere with his zeal for the interests of France.

It was not long before the subahdar was exposed to influences hostile to the French occupation. Syud Lushker Khan, a crafty Mahometan, became his prime minister. Sickness compelled Bussy to absent himself for a while, and Syud succeeded in dispersing the little army of French and sepoys through various districts; they were irregularly paid, every effort was made to render them discontented with the service, and the minister applied to the English for aid in relieving the country from its French protectors. These intrigues were discovered, and the wily minister found that he was dealing with resolute and dangerous enemies. Dupleix, like Hastings, never hesitated at any step which he thought the political situation required. "Would n't it be well for the authority of the subahdar and for our own interest," he wrote Bussy, "to chop

[1] *Sere Mutakeim.* A little allowance should probably be made for the fervid imagination of an eastern authority.

off the head of Syud Lushker Khan? Great evils need great remedies." [1]

His lieutenant did not resort to this measure, but he speedily brought the minister to terms. Hastening from his sick-bed, and collecting his little army at Hyderabad, he resolved at once to proceed to Aurungabad. It was a march of five hundred miles, the country through which he had to pass might prove hostile, and he had but a handful of men amid a dense population. But he did not hesitate, and the news of the French approach threw Syud Lushker into abject terror. He made no attempt to stop their advance, and as soon as Bussy had reached Aurungabad he confessed his evil ways, and promised fidelity for the future. The French commander did not follow Dupleix's suggestion, and Syud's head remained on his shoulders, but terms were exacted which should insure the future docility of the subahdar. He agreed to undertake no measures without Bussy's advice and approval; by an article still more important, he ceded to the French Company of the Indies four great provinces, constituting what is now known as the Southern Circars, of which the French should receive the revenues so long as they maintained an army in the Dekkan. Such a concession was practically an absolute grant. It was Dupleix's purpose to keep a French army permanently in the Dekkan, and to hold that country in the interest of France. The territory ceded extended for almost five hundred miles along the coast, it yielded a revenue of four hundred thousand pounds, it contained many important cities, it was rich in the products of the soil, its manufactures were extensive and varied. No European nation had

[1] Dupleix to Bussy, January 17, 1754.

ever possessed in India a dominion such as the French now held; they received the revenue of the Circars, the Dekkan was controlled by Bussy, and Dupleix was nawab of the territory south of the Kistna; almost the whole of the great peninsula between the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, where now dwell one hundred million people, was tributary to France.

While the power of France was thus increased in the Dekkan, Dupleix met with new difficulties in the Carnatic, and he encountered the man whose genius, assisted by the impotence of the French government, secured the empire of India for England.

Mahomet Ali, notwithstanding his defeats, had refused to submit to the authority of Chunda Sahib. Dupleix offered him liberal terms, for if Mahomet were quieted, nothing remained to disturb the tranquillity of the Carnatic. Left to his own resources, he would have been obliged to submit, but at last the English resolved to come to his assistance, and to oppose Dupleix in his endeavors to obtain complete control of the peninsula. Encouraged by the promises of their aid, Mahomet refused to make peace, and Dupleix resolved to reduce him to submission. Trichinopoly was the capital of the district which recognized Mahomet's authority, and the French undertook the siege of that city. If their efforts had been successful, it is probable that the peninsula would have become a French possession; but their failure, followed by Dupleix's recall, left the way clear for the establishment of the British empire in India.

The force sent to besiege Trichinopoly was large enough for the purpose, and it is doubtful if even Clive could have saved the place if he had encountered a general of moderate capacity. It detracts

nothing from Clive's glory, but it was his good fortune that in the memorable contest between France and England in India he met men far below mediocrity as opponents in the field. The death of Paradis and the transfer of Bussy to the Dekkan left Dupleix with no competent officers; his military operations failed almost without exception by reason of the blundering incapacity of the men to whom their execution was intrusted. It was perhaps a mistake that he did not himself accompany his forces. He was not indeed an educated soldier, but Clive's military education consisted in poring over books of account and drawing bills of lading. Successful warfare in India, where small bodies of men encountered undisciplined opponents, did not require the military skill with which an army of one hundred thousand men manœuvred in the battlefields of Europe; if Clive had gone from his desk at Madras to command an army in Flanders, his career might have been less successful. But Dupleix showed no disposition to act as leader of his soldiers, or to replace the lamentable incapacity of his officers. His enemies said that his boldness as a political schemer was not accompanied by an equal degree of physical bravery. It may have been so. Still, he showed courage at the siege of Pondicherri, and he may have argued with justice that if he exposed himself to the dangers of battle, and fell by some stray bullet or javelin, his death would be a fatal blow to French success in India. At all events, the command of the army besieging Trichinopoly was given to Law, a nephew of the famous John Law, and a worse man for the position could not have been found.

The French blockaded the town, and its capture

seemed only a question of time. The place could have been taken by storm, but Law declared that such an undertaking would cost the lives of too many men. If Dupleix had not the skill to command an army in the field, he had good judgment as to the course to be pursued. "The thing to be considered," he wrote Law, "is not how many men may be lost, but how to be done with the matter." Such remonstrances were wasted on his inert lieutenant, and while the siege dragged along, Dupleix found himself confronted with a new and dangerous antagonist. Taking a small body of men, Clive endeavored to divert the attention of the French from Trichinopoly by capturing the important city of Arcot, the capital of the possessions of Chunda Sahib, and the advantage which he thus gained he secured by his famous defense of the place against an army twenty times larger than his own.

While these victories did much to increase the prestige of the English in India, they did not accomplish the object which Clive desired; Dupleix kept his forces before Trichinopoly, and the town was still closely invested. The English, under Major Lawrence, with Clive for his second, now advanced to the relief of the city. Their plans were well designed, yet such were the advantages of Law's position that he could easily have repelled them. But the French commander manifested not only lack of military skill, but irresolution and timidity. In the midst of the siege he had written Dupleix asking that he might leave the army and return to Pondicherri, as his wife was to be confined and desired his presence. "Husbands usually avoid such scenes, which are very disgusting," replied Dupleix, "and you choose the most

critical moment, when the fate of Trichinopoly is to be decided." Law might as well have been at his wife's bedside as to have remained where he was. The English forced their way to Trichinopoly; not only was the siege raised, but the French army was now in a critical position. A position that was dangerous Law soon changed into a situation that was hopeless; his only course was to fall back upon Pondicherri; the retreat would not have been free from danger, but it might have been made with small loss. Instead of this, Law transferred his entire force to the island of Seringham, and the English at once cut off his retreat. Nothing now remained but to fight his way out or to surrender. As a last resort, Dupleix gathered together some reinforcements from the troops not already engaged at the siege, and they endeavored to form a junction with those shut up in the island. The governor took another step which had been too long delayed: he directed Law to turn over his command to Auteuil. "I am persuaded," added Dupleix sarcastically in his letter, "that this arrangement will give great pleasure to your wife." But it was too late for any measure to be efficacious; Law did not coöperate with the forces coming to his relief, and they were defeated by Clive. The French commander was paralyzed either by physical timidity or by the dread of an engagement, his provisions were failing, he dared not cross the river and risk a battle, and on the 3d of June, 1752, the army under his command, nearly eight hundred Europeans and two thousand sepoys, became prisoners of war.[1] Chunda Sahib was with them, and he had shown during the siege a mili-

[1] The MSS. account in the *Bib. Nat.* says there were only four hundred and fourteen Europeans made prisoners.

tary judgment far superior to that of the French commander. He now fell into the hands of his enemies, and met the usual fate of defeated rulers in India: he was at once stabbed, and his head was cut off and sent in triumph to Mahomet Ali.[1]

Such a reverse would have discouraged most men, but Dupleix was indomitable. His soldiers were prisoners, his ally was killed, but he at once began to seek new alliances and to collect new forces. He received a little aid from home, for five hundred men sent by the company arrived at Pondicherri. They were the refuse of the community: pickpockets who found Paris uncomfortable, bandits who had escaped from the jail and the galleys; they were ill armed, they did not know how to perform the simplest military evolution, but they were white men, and they could be equipped and drilled, and taught how to fire a gun. Sickness compelled Clive to return to Europe, and removed Dupleix's most formidable adversary. The princes who were allied with Mahomet Ali became jealous and discontented, and Jan Begum plied them with her most adroit letters. Hopes of gain detached the powerful regent of Mysore from the coalition; Dupleix obtained the warlike Mahrattas as allies; some small successes restored the prestige of the French army, and in 1753 the siege of Trichinopoly was again undertaken.

But fortune had deserted Dupleix. Seven hundred soldiers, under an experienced and skillful officer, sailed from France to recruit his scanty army; the

[1] For the siege of Trichinopoly there are the French official reports, the correspondence of Dupleix, and various MSS. accounts in the *Bib. Nat.*, also the memoirs of Lawrence. The best modern account is found in Malleson's *French in India.*

vessel was lost with almost every man on board. A well-concerted attempt was made to surprise Trichinopoly, and the French succeeded in mounting the outworks unobserved. Their orders were to push on in silence, but in the exultation of success, they let off a volley and roused the garrison. If the order to keep silence had been obeyed, said the English officers, the town would have been captured; as it was, the attack resulted in a disastrous failure.[1]

Still, the position of Dupleix was by no means desperate; the Subahdar of the Dekkan, whose power was second only to that of the Mogul, was his firm ally; the influence which the French exerted in the Carnatic was not inferior to that of the English, and in his ability to enlist the native princes in his cause, Dupleix was equaled by no one; a few thousand good soldiers would still have secured India to France. He sent Auteuil to Paris to explain the situation, and to ask the aid of the government in the great enterprises which he had undertaken. "The honor and glory of the king and the advantage to the nation are the two points he will discuss," wrote Dupleix. "The minister must act, and the king give his orders."[2] Trusting to arguments that might prove more efficacious with Louis XV. than appeals for the glory of France, Mme. Dupleix sent magnificent presents to be given to Mme. de Pompadour.

In the mean time Dupleix began negotiations for peace, but they were little more than a farce. Dupleix would concede nothing that could permanently affect the influence of France; the English desired no peace which should leave that unimpaired. "The

[1] See the accounts of Lawrence and Colonel Wilkes.

[2] Dupleix, October 15, 1752.

conferences will result in nothing," Dupleix wrote to Bussy, "unless we are willing to dishonor ourselves, and you will never advise me to do that."[1] Both parties produced proofs of the titles of the princes they supported, but in India the only valid title was superior force. If any local potentate thought that a firman signed by the Emperor of Delhi or the Subahdar of the Dekkan would render his claim more plausible, he never hesitated to forge what was required. "All that we produced on our side," said Dupleix, "firmans, paravanas, and other documents, were forged. The other side did not condescend to exhibit anything to us, either forged or genuine, but said that we could take their word for what they alleged."[2] The negotiations resulted in nothing.

The disasters at Trichinopoly had sealed the fate of Dupleix. During all the years that he had been building up the power of France in the East, he had met either opposition or lukewarm support from the directors of the East India Company; his plans aroused no enthusiasm in the public mind; the possibility of a French empire in India excited less interest at Versailles than the appointment of a gentleman in waiting, or the success of the last comedy at Mme. de Pompadour's theatre.

The French Company of the Indies had never grasped the possibilities which might result from Dupleix's policy. The directors were interested only in earning dividends, and they did not realize that the profits on a few shiploads of spice or cotton cloth were paltry compared with the wealth to be gained by administering great states. It was a question whether

[1] Letter of December 31, 1753.

[2] Dupleix to Bussy.

they should be princes or shopkeepers, and they preferred to remain shopkeepers. "It is time to limit the extent of our possessions in India," the directors wrote the governor-general; "the company fears any increase of its domains. Its object is not to become a great power."[1] "The company desires nothing which can excite the jealousy of other nations; it does not need states, but some port for its trade with a territory two or three leagues in extent."[2] "What shall we answer," they wrote again, "to those who say we wish to be conquerors instead of merchants?"[3] "The company wishes no alliance with any legitimate sovereign or with any usurper. Let them end their quarrels as they can without our furnishing aid to one side or the other."[4]

Louis XV. and his ministers took no broader or more statesmanlike views than the merchants who assembled in the Rue neuve des Capucins. "We wish," wrote the royal commissioner, "no victories, no conquests, a great deal of merchandise, and some increase in dividends." The Subahdar of the Dekkan asked for a force of French auxiliaries, which, though not large in itself, would have rendered him the most powerful sovereign in India; the expense of this army would have been paid by further grants to the company, and they would have remained under Bussy's command; with such a force the subahdar could have dictated terms at the gates of Delhi or Calcutta, and the army of the greatest ruler in India would have been led by a French general, his policy would have

[1] Letter of February 1, 1752.
[2] Instructions to Godehue.
[3] Letter of January 2, 1753.
[4] Silhouette to Dupleix, September 13, 1752.

been dictated by a French statesman, his dominions would have been really tributary to France.

When Dupleix asked for this assistance, he met with a chilling response. It was the decision of the king, as well as of the company, wrote the directors, that the request should be refused; such measures, it was feared, could only serve to teach the inhabitants of the country the arts of war; "once accustomed to warfare," added the directors, "will they not become our masters? and should we take the hazard of finding ourselves in so dangerous a condition? The position we should take is that of an exact neutrality. An alliance with Mozuffer Jung or Chunda Sahib may serve to foster their ambition and to perpetuate disturbances in India which will be fatal to our commerce."[1]

Despite such discouraging instructions, Dupleix had established Bussy in the Dekkan, with an army that was formidable in courage and discipline, if not in numbers, and there was now an opportunity to open diplomatic relations with the Mogul himself. The governor-general saw in his imagination a French proconsul established at Delhi as at Aurungabad, and in the Mogul, an ally, a representative, and even a subject of France. "You and all of Europe will be surprised at the effect such an embassy will produce," wrote Dupleix. "The time for the harvest is come, and we must profit by it." Such an embassy required to be accompanied with presents fitting the dignity of the monarch to whom it was sent, and this was enough to alarm the directors. "You were at least indiscreet in determining upon such an important step," they wrote Dupleix; "the company has no thoughts of sending presents to the Mogul. It is an expense

[1] Letter of February 1, 1752.

which we must avoid." It is by such considerations that the fate of nations is decided.

In truth, these visions of Dupleix, which were soon to be realized by the English, were regarded in France as the wildest chimeras. "You may say," wrote the minister of finance to the French ambassador at London, "that we do not desire to have possessions in India more extensive than those of England, nor to exact nine millions of revenue, nor to keep for ourselves the exclusive commerce of Golconda or the Coromandel coast. We look upon such projects as chimeras."[1] The abbés and poets of Versailles jested about the visions of Dupleix, who thought that with two or three thousand soldiers he could dictate terms to the Great Mogul, who sat on a throne of precious stones, surrounded by a splendor that Versailles could not excel; whose armies were hundreds of thousands of men, and whose treasury contained untold lakhs of rupees.

The indifference of the court was shared by the public, and an evil example was set by the economical writers, who already exercised a considerable influence on French thought. The economists taught much that was wise and much that was foolish, and for colonial development and the acquisition of foreign empire they professed a philosophical contempt. This phase of popular feeling, like so many of its phases, found its expression in Voltaire.

"These vast domains," he wrote, "these costly establishments, and the wars undertaken to maintain them, are the fruit of the effeminacy of our cities and the avidity of our merchants. It is to furnish the bourgeois of Paris and London with more delicacies

[1] Machault to Mirepoix, March 11, 1754.

than are consumed at the tables of princes, to bedeck the wives of citizens with more diamonds than queens wear at their coronations, and to infect our nostrils with a disgusting powder, that this immense commerce has started, which is always disadvantageous to three quarters of Europe; it is to sustain this commerce that great powers have begun a war, where the first cannon fired has opened the batteries of America and Asia."[1]

When the projects of Dupleix were regarded by the king, the company, and the public as the chimeras of an excited imagination, it was only by constant success that he could retain his position. The directors had given a grudging approval to his actions when they resulted in the elevation of Mozuffer and of Chunda Sahib, and in the acquisition of large territories by the company. Even if they mistrusted his policy, they could hardly condemn undertakings which had been crowned with signal success. But he was constantly crippled by the feeble support they gave him; during the eleven years in which he had made French influence predominant from Cape Comorin to Aurungabad, the company sent him only two thousand two hundred soldiers in all.[2] It was the advice of Godehue, who finally succeeded him in office, to stint the reinforcements sent to India, lest Dupleix should become too aggressive.[3] The directors were in constant apprehension of the complications in which they might become involved, and the king and his

[1] *Fragments sur l'Inde.*

[2] *Mém. pour Dupleix*, App. 2.

[3] This policy is stated in the manuscript journal of Godehue. See pp. 28, 31: "Il faut qu'il ne puisse pas abuser de trop grandes forces," etc.

ministers had no sympathy with plans to win for France an empire greater than that which had been ruled by Charlemagne.

When it was known at Paris that the siege of Trichinopoly had resulted in failure, and that Law's army had surrendered to the English, all the enemies of Dupleix, those who believed him a tyrant, those who were envious of his success, his wealth, and his power, united in demanding his overthrow. The officers of the English Company at last realized that India offered a field for enterprises more important than shipping ivory and spice from Calcutta, or selling knives from Birmingham, and they knew that Dupleix was the greatest obstacle to English domination in the East. It is strange that the managers of the French Company should have thought it wise to be governed in the choice of their agents by the opinion of their rivals, but so it was. They cherished the delusion that the two companies could agree upon an amicable division of the Indian trade, abandon all thoughts of territorial dominion, leave subahdars and nawabs to fight their own battles, and devote themselves in harmony to the peaceable earning of dividends.[1] "Nothing could be easier," replied the English, "if you would only remove that firebrand Dupleix; it is his wild ambition, his restless interference, that keeps India in confusion and prevents us both from earning our dividends in peace."[2] Such suggestions met the approval of the

[1] See the proposition to that effect in the archives of the marine, prepared by the French Company for submission to the English. As has been truly said, it reads like an idyl of St. Pierre.

[2] There are constant statements to this effect in the correspondence from the French agents in England. See especially the letters of Duvalaer.

officers of the French Company, and they were agreeable to the French ministers. The government wished to avoid any quarrel with England; Dupleix was involving them in schemes for which they had no taste; by sacrificing him they hoped to gain the good will of the English and secure their own tranquillity.

It was decided to recall Dupleix, and in October, 1753, Godehue was chosen to represent both the king and the company in India. He took with him an order for Dupleix's recall, and also secret directions for his arrest if any resistance were attempted.[1] The odious comedy was played of assuring Dupleix that Godehue was sent to his assistance with a large body of troops.[2] "Godehue," wrote Dupleix, "is the dearest of my friends; I await him with impatience." On the 1st of August, 1754, the friend reached Pondicherri; he at once presented to Dupleix letters of recall, and bade him and his family take passage for Europe at the first opportunity.[3] Dupleix submitted quietly to these orders, and it was not thought necessary to put him under arrest.

No event could have caused greater excitement in India than the overthrow of the famous French governor-general. Not only did his adherents see in this step the ruin of French interests, but the native rulers took the same view.[4] With entire justice they regarded it as a triumph for England, and they could conceive no reason for Dupleix's recall, except that

[1] Instructions for Godehue. The order for Dupleix's arrest was signed by the king, October 29, 1753.

[2] See among other letters that of Godehue to Dupleix, March 31, 1753.

[3] MS. *Journal de Godehue*, 105.

[4] See the various letters published in the *Mémoires pour le Sieur Dupleix.*

France feared the English and had deposed him at their dictation. "It appears that the French are neither as powerful nor as generous as they wished us to believe," wrote one of the ministers of the Subahdar of the Dekkan, "and the English have the upper hand of them. I will not conceal the fact that I purpose to treat with the English."

Not only was Dupleix disgraced and his policy abandoned, but he was himself reduced to poverty. To the cause that was dear to him he had devoted his entire fortune; he had advanced all his ready money, and in addition he had pledged his credit for vast sums. These moneys had been expended in the enterprises of the company; his acts had been ratified by its officers, and they had resulted in territorial gains from which great revenues could have been obtained. The cash advances of Dupleix were said to amount to three million livres, and he had pledged his credit for four million more.[1] The company surrendered the advantages which he had gained for it, and repudiated the debts which he had incurred. All of Dupleix's possessions in India were confiscated, the bills which he held were dishonored; even his personal effects were seized, and it was with difficulty that he procured the release of sufficient linen for his voyage.[2] He found himself a ruined man.

He returned to France and presented his claim against the company. It seems to have been a just

[1] *Mém. pour Dupleix*, 118, 122, 135.

[2] See *Mém. pour Dupleix*, 173. Godehue denies this, and says he took the revenues and the possessions granted Dupleix in India for the benefit of his creditors. *Journal*, 274. But his creditors were those who had advanced money to the company on his credit.

one. It is certain that Dupleix was a man of great wealth when he was made governor-general, and was hopelessly bankrupt when he was removed, unless the company would repay the advances he had made. There could be no better proof of the honesty of his conduct and the extent of his sacrifices. If he had invested his wealth in lands and rentes in France, instead of devoting it to the cause in which he was engaged, he could have returned to his own country and supported a state which would have eclipsed that of the richest prince of the blood, he could have built palaces more splendid than those erected by the most extravagant of farmers-general; he did go back to obscurity and need, to wear out his life in struggling with his creditors and endeavoring to escape the bailiff. The company refused to allow his claims on the plea that they were not verified as the regulations required; the administration in India was now hostile to him, and the technical verification demanded he was unable to obtain. He had no friends at court; the litigation dragged along for years without decision; the company held his property in India and would give him nothing. If his claims were larger than it could meet, at least a faithful servant should not have been left to end his days in need. But Dupleix was never paid a sou. He spent eight years at Paris, leading the saddest of all lives, that of a needy litigant. In 1758, his suit against the company was sent to the royal council, and there for the five remaining years of his life it rested undecided. His creditors seized what effects he had in France, and threatened him with imprisonment; his wife and daughter died in distress. One of the last letters written by the once famous Jan Begum was a request to the comptroller general

not to allow her husband to be imprisoned for debt.[1] "It is the last letter I shall write you," she says, "and I ask you to give me at least this consolation before I die." Dupleix's house was sold on execution; the purchaser demanded possession, and the upholsterer threatened to sell the furniture. Some of his friends interfered to prevent his being put in the street, and he was allowed to die under a roof and not in the gutter.

On November 10, 1763, he ended a career more strange in vicissitudes than often falls to man's lot; beginning as a humble subordinate, he had become the head of a great corporation; he had ruled empires, the very names of which were unknown to most Europeans; he had accumulated wealth which would seem vast to a prosperous banker of Amsterdam; he had deposed great rulers and placed his followers on thrones; he had inaugurated a policy which was to affect the condition, the happiness, the institutions of untold millions of men in ages to come.

Four days before his death he wrote: "I have sacrificed my youth, my fortune, and my life to gain power and wealth for my country in Asia. Unfortunate friends, confiding relatives, have devoted their property to the success of my plans. They are now in misery. I demand what is my due, like the meanest of creditors; my services are called fables, my demands ridiculous. I am in the most deplorable indigence. What little property was left me has been seized by my creditors, and I have been obliged to ask aid to escape being dragged into prison." No man ever summed up his own case more justly. It was the treatment accorded one of the greatest French states-

[1] Letter of November 3, 1758.

men by the government of Louis XV. and Mme. de Pompadour.

Both Clive and Hastings met with opposition and obloquy in their endeavors to win an empire for Great Britain, but they lived to see their efforts crowned with success, and to enjoy the reward of their services. Dupleix was the equal of either in intellect, in resolution, and in constancy; he was their superior in the originality of his genius. Had he lived in the time of Richelieu or Colbert, he would have served men able to understand him and ready to support him; he might have done great things for his country, and have gained fame for himself. But his lot was cast in the evil days of Louis XV.; he saw his projects brought to naught by the fault of others; he was treated with contumely by the king whose reign he sought to make glorious; he was discarded by the company to whose service he devoted his life and his fortune; he was regarded with indifference by the nation whose wealth and power he would so greatly have increased; he died of a broken heart, with the bailiff knocking at his door, and his family asking in vain for some one to relieve their distress.

CHAPTER X.

THE LOSS OF AN EASTERN EMPIRE.

After the recall of Dupleix, the French empire which he had founded in the East soon crumbled away. In a few years the supremacy of England was established in India beyond any possibility of future overthrow.

Godehue was the man selected by the French Company to replace the great governor-general, and he was sent to India to obtain peace on any terms. The company refused Dupleix the soldiers with which he might have made himself master of a large part of Hindustan, and it sent two thousand men with Godehue with orders to make peace forthwith. His instructions told him that the great object of his mission was to pacify the troubles which had arisen; he was to remember that the company did not wish to become a temporal power, that extended possessions were difficult to protect, and that his first endeavor must be to conciliate the English.[1] The new representative of the company was well fitted to carry out these pusillanimous directions. He was a man without ability, and he suspected every one with whom he had to deal.[2] Bussy, in his judgment, was an empty boaster; the employees at Pondicherri were the corrupt tools of his predecessor; and for the late gov-

[1] Instructions à M. Godehue.

[2] The best proof of this is Godehue's MS. *Journal*, preserved at the *Bib. Nat.*

ernor-general himself he had an envious hatred; whatever Dupleix had accomplished, Godehue was eager to undo. In this purpose he was successful. The English had only to propose terms to have them accepted; they were ready to demand concessions, and the French were prepared to make them; there was, therefore, little difficulty in reaching an agreement. On the 26th of December, 1754, two months after Dupleix had sailed for home, a treaty was signed by which the French yielded most of the advantages he had gained for them. They surrendered a large part of their possessions, they agreed to divide with the English the great domains which had been ceded to France, they renounced all dignities granted by native princes, and promised to take no part in the disputes between native rulers.[1] The English also agreed to renounce Indian dignities, but they had none to surrender; they promised to take no part in internal dissensions; the agreement was not observed, and it was impossible that it should be. The two great western companies could no longer remain mere trading corporations; they must be sovereigns or be insignificant.[2] The French chose the latter.

The French Company of the East Indies had dismissed Dupleix and abandoned his policy in its desire for peace and dividends; all that it gained was war

[1] Articles conditionnels signés à Pondicherri le 26 Decembre, 1754. The renunciation of Indian offices and dignities included a surrender of the Nawabship of the Carnatic granted to Dupleix as representative of the East India Company.

[2] "If the company pursues a timid policy," wrote Dupleix, "and takes no part in the internal affairs of India, within thirty or forty years it will come to sure ruin." *Mém. pour le sieur Dupleix*, 183. His prophecy was verified in less time than he had allowed.

and bankruptcy. In 1756, the Seven Years' war began, and hostilities recommenced in India. But the contest was now an unequal one; the French had weakened their prestige, they had surrendered a large part of their possessions, they had forfeited the confidence of most of their allies. In 1757, Clive captured Chandarnagar, and with the fall of that place the French lost their foothold in Bengal. The relics of their power in the Carnatic and the Dekkan were all that now remained for the English to destroy.

At last the court of Versailles resolved to make some effort to strengthen the position of France in the East. Dupleix had been recalled by the order of Louis XV. Godehue had been sent to make peace, as the representative of the court as well as of the company; but when the opportunity was gone, it was decided that an attempt should be made to regain what had been abandoned, to win back what had been lost. In 1756, the Count Lally-Tollendal was appointed commander of the forces in India, and he was sent out with instructions to overthrow the ascendency which the English had gained in that country.

If only zeal had been required, Lally might have accomplished the task. He had been bred to hate England, as Hannibal was taught to hate Rome. His father, Sir Gerard Lally, was an Irishman, who took up arms in behalf of James II., and when the cause was lost he sought refuge in France. He became an officer in the French army and served with credit, but his zeal in the service of his adopted country did not make him forget his loyalty to the House of Stuart. Amid all the fugitives who dreamed of the day when the king should have his own again, and when his followers should return in triumph to England, under

the protection of a lawful sovereign, no one was more filled with such illusions than Sir Gerard; no one cherished a more bitter hatred for the impious rebels who had made an outcast of the Lord's anointed, and who supported a usurper on the throne. The young Lally-Tollendal was brought up as the son of such a man would be: he learned to be brave, to hate the English, and always to be in the wrong.

His military services, like those of many French nobles, began in childhood. At eight years of age he had his commission as a captain, and he accompanied his father in a campaign; at twelve he mounted guard in the trenches before Barcelona; while he was still a youth, he had shown his courage and ardor in many engagements. When there was no further opportunity for active service, Lally engaged in Jacobite plots in England, and afterwards he went on a secret mission to the Russian court, in the hope of arranging an alliance between France and Russia which should insure the restoration of the Stuarts.

The war of the Austrian Succession enabled him to pursue his military career, and at the battle of Fontenoy he won great distinction; he had the satisfaction of commanding a brigade of loyal Irishmen, and of witnessing the defeat of the followers of the House of Hanover; he was wounded, he was publicly complimented for his gallantry, and he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general. Such a man was sure to be found among the followers of Charles Edward in his endeavor to regain the throne of his ancestors, and Lally obtained the consent of the French government to follow the prince, whom he still regarded as his sovereign. After the overthrow of the Pretender's fortunes, Lally tried to obtain aid for

his unfortunate master in Ireland and in Spain; he visited London, and there engaged in plots against the government. A price was put on his head, and he made his escape in the disguise of a sailor; a party of smugglers captured him, and, being in need of another hand, they compelled him to serve with them. He submitted to his fate, but he disingenuously advised his new associates to land on the French coast, where he assured them they would be undisturbed and could reap great profits. They were all captured by the French authorities and thrown in prison, when Lally was soon identified and released. His services in the Stuart cause were rewarded by the shadowy honor of an Irish peerage conferred by the Pretender.[1]

Lally was selected for the command in India in the belief that his military talents and his zeal against the English would there find a field for their exercise. The choice was an unfortunate one. Lally was certainly a good soldier, but he was a very unfit man for the position which he now assumed. His adventurous and unsatisfactory career had made him a morose and suspicious man; he had no skill in dealing with subordinates, and he was profoundly ignorant of India. He had indeed presented his views on the policy to be pursued there, but they were the views of a man who knew nothing about the subject. "It is an absolute necessity," he wrote, "to renounce the system of Dupleix, which was the cause of so many disasters. Our policy is to begin by exterminating the English in India; after that, we will show a moderation in victory which will secure the respect and love of all our neighbors."[2] His instructions corresponded with

[1] *Mém. pour le Comte Lally*, by his son.

[2] His views are stated in a *Mémoire* in the *MSS. Bib. Nat.*

these views. He was bidden to relieve the company from all its alliances which had proved ruinous to its commerce; he was authorized to withdraw the French troops from the Dekkan and to remove Bussy, and he was ordered to expel the English from the Coromandel coast, that the Company of the Indies might devote itself to a peaceable and profitable trade, undisturbed by foreign rivals.[1]

Lally found the extermination of the English a serious enterprise; he disdained to follow Dupleix's example and obtain the aid of the native powers, and it was not strange that his efforts resulted in the final overthrow of the French empire in the Indies.

The mistakes which he made as a commander were aggravated by the remissness of the government in giving him support. Lally had been promised six battalions of troops and six millions of money; when the time came to embark, he had to be content with four battalions and four millions. It was not always that the government furnished its generals with even two thirds of the troops which they were supposed to command. In May, 1757, Lally and his little army set sail for the Indies.[2] The voyage was long, even for that period, and it was one year lacking four days from the time he embarked until he landed at Pondicherri.

Upon his arrival, Lally showed the vigor in which he was never lacking. He at once laid siege to Fort St. David, an enterprise which the French had often undertaken, and in which they had always failed. This time the siege was carried to a successful conclu-

[1] *Instructions à Lally.*

[2] A portion of his troops set sail earlier, and reached Pondicherri in September, 1757.

sion. Lally imparted his own energy to the troops under his command; he worked himself in the trenches, and handled a pick and a spade along with his men.[1] On June 2, 1758, Fort St. David surrendered, and the fortifications were destroyed. The career of the new commander began auspiciously, but his first victory was also his last. A series of disasters extending over three years resulted in the destruction of Pondicherri, the surrender of Lally with all his troops, and the expulsion of the French from India. Many causes contributed to these disasters, but the character of this brave and unfortunate officer had much to do with the failure of his plans. If he had possessed the knowledge of India, the fertility of resource, the skill in exciting the confidence and the support of subordinates, which was found in Clive and Bussy and Dupleix, he might have accomplished much, even with the resources at his command. No sooner had Fort St. David surrendered, than Lally decided on a measure which did more harm to the cause than his victory did good. When he advised the authorities at Paris as to the policy to be pursued in a land which he had never seen, he had denounced any endeavors to extend the protection of France to the native princes. Since then he had come to India, but he was a man who learned little from his surroundings; his views were as unchangeable regarding Indian policy as they were concerning the divine right of the Stuarts. In June, 1758, he sent orders to Bussy to withdraw his troops from the Dekkan and to return to Pondicherri. This command filled Bussy with consternation. The French general knew that when the Subahdar of the Dekkan was abandoned by

[1] *Mém. pour Lally*, i. 63.

his present supporters, he would at once seek an alliance with the English, and the ascendency of France in that great country would be destroyed by the mistaken judgment of a French commander. His regret was natural, as he saw the impending overthrow of a system to the establishment of which Dupleix and himself had devoted years of successful labor; what had been gained by genius was to be frittered away by folly. It was with truth that he had written Argenson: "I have placed kings on the throne. . . . I have put to flight great armies, and captured cities by assault with a handful of men. . . . Kings, princes, and rajahs have made me mediator and judge of their disputes. . . . I have made the alliance of France sought by all the powers of the Mogul's empire; our friendship has been purchased at the price of vast domains, and these advantages the company will hold so long as it retains the favor of the ruler of the Dekkan." "If we abandon that country," he added, "our power is gone. . . . Salabut will seek the assistance of the English and will turn against us. The evacuation of the Dekkan is the ruin of our Indian establishment." [1] Salabut was equally dismayed by the desertion of the allies who had protected him for eight years. "Your monarch has promised to protect me against my enemies," said the subahdar to the French commander. "I must have the support of a European power, and I must now solicit the aid of the English."

It was in vain that Bussy endeavored to change Lally's decision. The new commander was set in his opinions, he was deaf to arguments, and, in addition to this, he was very suspicious of Bussy. Love of

[1] Bussy to Argenson, *MSS. de l'Arsenal.*

money was not among Lally's faults; he came to India with the purpose of enforcing the severest self-sacrifice among men who were eager to get rich, and he could not understand that the conditions of Indian society and politics made practices excusable, which in Europe would have been highly reprehensible. Bussy had gained large wealth from his position in the Dekkan; it was clear, therefore, to Lally's mind that he was a corrupt and a wicked man. If he argued in favor of the French occupation, it was because he wished to remain at Aurungabad, and use his power to squeeze lakhs of rupees out of subservient rajahs and nawabs; when he talked of the advantages for France, he was thinking of the advantages for himself. He was already worth twenty million livres, said Lally, and if he had stayed in the Dekkan, he would have made five or ten millions more.[1] Naturally, Bussy's arguments found no favor with the new commander. "It does not matter to me," Lally wrote him, "if a younger son disputes the Dekkan with his older brother, or if certain rajahs are quarreling about certain nawabies. When I have exterminated the English on the coast, I can arrange operations from my cabinet which will be more productive than those that have cost so many subjects to the king and so many rupees to the company." [2] Bussy dared not take the responsibility of disobedience, and with a very ill grace he led away from Aurungabad the little army which had won so great victories. In the following year, Salabut made a treaty with the English, and agreed that French auxiliaries should not again be received in his domin-

[1] *Mém. pour Lally*, i. 28 *et pas.* Lally's letters are full of complaints against Bussy.

[2] Lally to Bussy, June 13, 1758.

ions. The great province of the Dekkan was lost to France without the English having to fire a gun.

In the mean time Lally pursued his plans for the expulsion of the English, the cause to which he wished to devote himself exclusively. He found it a task of some difficulty, and it became none the easier when he had contemptuously rejected the aid of the former allies of France. If the troops furnished by the native princes were of little value, the money which could be obtained from them was indispensable. It was by means of such aid that Dupleix had been able to keep armies in the field, with small assistance from the company and no assistance from the government. The Company of the Indies had no resources with which it could prosecute war; the general government was always in financial straits, and no one could expect that it would furnish regular and sufficient supplies with which to carry on a contest against the English on the distant coast of the Coromandel; the resources for war in India had to be derived from India itself; without the succor of the native princes, said Bussy, it was impossible to provide for the needs of the army.

The scanty supplies with which Lally had been furnished were soon exhausted; he had brought with him four million livres, and the expenses of the war were a million a month. Immediately after the surrender of Fort St. David, he was confronted with the problem of an empty treasury, and in this dilemma it was suggested that he might raise the needed funds by levying contribution on the Rajah of Tanjore. Some years before, that prince had executed a bond to Chunda Sahib for fifty-five lakhs of rupees, and this had been transferred to the company. The claim was stale, the

debtor had no inclination to pay any of it, and was unable to pay it in full. But it was only necessary to threaten the rajah, said Lally's advisers, and he would promptly disgorge enough to support the army for a year. Impelled by his financial needs, Lally abandoned his plans for the siege of Madras and marched to Tanjore. The expedition resulted in total failure. Lally was ignorant of the country and of its resources, he received few supplies from Pondicherri, and his soldiers suffered for the necessaries of life. He was unfamiliar also with the wiles of Indian politics, and the rajah fooled him with promises which he repudiated as soon as he was assured of English support. After an unsuccessful campaign of two months, Lally abandoned the siege of Tanjore.

His needs were still more pressing after this unsuccessful expedition, but he resolved to delay no longer before attempting the siege of Madras. In this he was certainly right; Madras was the most important English possession on the Coromandel coast; its capture would have gone far towards realizing his dream of expelling the English from the peninsula, and if his associates had shared the zeal of their commander, it would not have been impossible.

For success he needed men and money and faithful lieutenants, and he was scantily supplied with any of the three. It was only a sporadic exhibition of activity which led the home government to send Lally to India, and to announce its intention of restoring French influence in that country. Its energy was exhausted by the effort; it furnished Lally with no further aid, and left him to carry on the war against the English as best he could. The expenses of the war in Europe, wrote the comptroller general, did not

allow the king to furnish any further assistance to the East India Company, and it must now rely on its own resources.[1] It was in vain that Lally turned to the company for aid, after the government had formally notified him of its desertion. "For two years," said the authorities of Pondicherri, "we have been using every expedient to maintain ourselves. . . . We have exhausted all our resources, we are absolutely powerless and can do nothing to help you."[2] Even the forces, which might have been utilized for the war in India, were paralyzed by a vicious system. The fleet sent out under Aché was hardly inferior to that of the English; its assistance was indispensable for Lally's success, but he was unable to obtain it. The government had given the absolute command of the squadron to Aché; if he saw fit to assist Lally, he could do so; if he was unwilling, the commander of the land forces had no right to control his action. But the naval commander was one of the inefficient marine officers who insured the victory of the English on the sea, from the Gulf of the St. Lawrence to the coast of Coromandel; if he had surrendered his ships to the enemy, he could hardly have done more harm than was caused by his remissness and timidity. The cooperation of the fleet was necessary for the capture of Madras, and Aché refused to coöperate. He had already encountered the English squadron, and although the one side had suffered almost as much as the other, he was discouraged by the results and resolved to return forthwith to the Isle of France. It was in vain that Lally remonstrated; Aché sailed away and left the English in peaceable possession of

[1] Boulongne to Lally, February 6, 1758.

[2] Letters of October 8, 1758; March 3, 1759.

the Indian seas. Not disheartened by all these obstacles, in December, 1758, Lally laid siege to Madras; he captured the "black town," and if the garrison had received no reinforcements, the city might at last have been forced to surrender. On the 16th of February, 1759, ships were seen approaching in the distance. It was uncertain whether they were French or English, though one who knew the characters of the commanders might have been sure which would come at the hour of need. The vessels of Admiral Pococke sailed up to the town, and on the following day the siege was raised.[1]

So bitter was the hatred towards Lally among the French residents that his repulse excited exultation rather than regret. Lally had come to India resolved to check the corruption which was prevalent, and he made such efforts as he could to accomplish this end. The French in India, like the English, sought some compensation for residence in a distant land, and they accumulated fortunes by any means in their power. The evil was a serious one, but it was a necessary result of the manner in which both of the East India companies were then administered. It needed the strong hand of Clive, at a time when India was at peace, and with all the prestige of his success, to reform the administration of the English Company. When war was waging, and every effort was needed to resist a powerful enemy, it was an unfortunate time for Lally to attempt such reforms. Besides this he had not the prestige of success; he was proving himself an unfortunate instead of a victorious leader, and even if he was not responsible for these defeats, he had to bear the blame. He was, moreover, lacking in

[1] Journal of siege, by John Call, engineer-in-chief.

the ability to gain friends, and was successful only in exciting animosities, and he poured out his complaints in a way that increased the ill will of the community in which he was thrown. "I had rather command the Caffres of Madagascar," he said, "than to remain in that Sodom of Pondicherri; if the fire of heaven does not destroy it, that of the English soon will." [1] "I want to leave Asia," he wrote Bussy, "even if I could stay here and conquer the terrestrial paradise." [2]

Though Lally's purposes were always commendable, his conduct was often injudicious. During the siege of Fort St. David, he asked the authorities to furnish means of transportation, and they were slow in responding. In a rage, he went to Pondicherri, and made a forced requisition of laborers, without regard to class or position. Sudra and pariah, priest and Brahmin, were harnessed to the cannon side by side. Such an act was revolting to the caste feelings, that were strong in India: it was as offensive to popular prejudices as if the governor of Paris had ordered dukes to be yoked with the hangman and set at work tearing down Notre Dame.[3] Lally became odious to the native population, as he already was to the Europeans. He mistrusted all his officers, and Bussy, the most prominent of them, whom he had always disliked, he now abhorred. "He is the falsest of men, the greatest liar, the greatest pillager, of whom you have ever heard," he wrote. "Of all the malefactors condemned to be broken on the wheel during a hundred years, there is not one whose crimes approach those of

[1] See *Mém. pour Lally*, ii. 86.

[2] Lally to Bussy, April 28, 1759.

[3] Remark cited in Hamont, *La fin d'un empire*, 86, 7.

Bussy."[1] Lally was never reticent, and the complaints in which he indulged were bruited abroad in the community. Naturally, Bussy did not show himself a zealous lieutenant of a general who held this opinion of him; like most of his associates, he continued to serve with a half-concealed desire for the defeat of a commander whom no one loved.

The common soldiers had still more substantial grounds for discontent, for which Lally was in no way responsible. He had neither money to pay them nor sufficient food to give them; as a result there were frequent mutinies, and some of the men deserted to the English. In the service of England, they said, they were sure of food and of their wages, and they were unwilling longer to go hungry for the cause of France. In 1759, the soldiers, so their officers reported, had neither shirts, nor shoes, nor stockings, nor provisions, and this was the chronic condition of the French army during the last two years of the struggle with England for the possession of India.[2]

Aché's refusal to let the fleet assist in the siege of Madras was followed by an almost total desertion of the French interests in India. In September, 1759, nearly thirteen months after he had sailed away from Pondicherri, his fleet reappeared on the Coromandel coast. It brought some insignificant reinforcements, a little money, and a few soldiers. Having done this, Aché regarded his duties as fulfilled. He had eleven vessels under his command and over seven thousand men; it was the most formidable squadron that had been seen in the Indian seas. He encountered the English fleet, but was unsuccessful, though superior in ships and cannon. Although

[1] Lally to Silhouette. [2] *Mém. pour Lally*, i. 172.

defeated, he had suffered no loss which compelled him to abandon India to the enemy, but it was enough to discourage so faint-hearted a commander. No sooner had he anchored at Pondicherri, than he wrote Lally that he could only remain two days. "I must even sacrifice the pleasure I should have in meeting you," he added.[1] The desertion of the fleet left Pondicherri in danger of capture, and the officials of the company joined with Lally in a protest against such conduct. "We protest against your departure," their official resolution read, "and we declare you responsible for the loss of this colony. We will send our complaints to the king and demand justice." [2] But nothing could affect Aché. "I have been beaten, gentlemen," he answered the deputation, "and I shall leave." [3] He was also afraid of the monsoon, that terror of timid sailors, and he dared not encounter the autumnal storms on this coast. He did indeed promise that he would return, and that he would never abandon Pondicherri,[4] but the promise was not kept. During the sixteen months that elapsed before Pondicherri surrendered to the English, the French fleet never reappeared; in twenty-nine months, it spent twelve days on the Coromandel coast, where alone it could be of any service.[5] The superiority of the English fleets, not in numbers, but in the ability and courage with which they were commanded, was an important factor in securing the victory of England in India. As Lally bitterly said, "The English know no seasons in India; their fleet

[1] Aché to Lally, September 5, 1759.
[2] Protestation de Septembre 17, 1759.
[3] *Mém. pour Lally*, i. 180.
[4] Letter of October 1, 1759.
[5] *Mém. pour Lally*, i. 185.

blockaded Pondicherri in winter as well as in summer." For three years the English squadron never left the coast, but during all the years of war between France and England, the French did not have a naval commander who possessed courage enough to spend the autumn and winter in the Indian seas.[1] It was not that they were afraid of their persons, but they were afraid of their ships; in the courage which came from experience on the sea, and confidence in their ability to manœuvre a fleet, they were as a rule far inferior to the English commanders. Aché was a courageous man in battle, but a coward in exposing his fleet to the risk of battle. It could be said of him, as of a far better officer, he was brave in his heart and a coward in his head.

The fleet deserted the cause, the soldiers were ill paid and mutinous, and the position of the French grew steadily worse. On January 22, 1760, the decisive battle was fought at Wandewash. Lally had about fourteen hundred Europeans under his command; the English, under Colonel Coote, were about nineteen hundred strong, and they had some advantage in the number of their native auxiliaries.[2] The forces were insignificant compared with those which met on the battlefields of Europe, but the issues were momentous. A decisive victory might have secured French ascendency, a disastrous defeat was sure to end

[1] *Cause de la perte des Indes*, 13; *Copie des lettres par le Comte d'Aché*, 31. An interesting account of the naval contest between the French and English in the Indian seas is found in Mahan's valuable book, *Influence of the Sea Power in History*. The *Mémoire pour Aché* and his correspondence furnish no satisfactory explanation of his shameful conduct.

[2] There is much dispute as to the numbers engaged, but those stated are probably approximately right, and are those adopted by Colonel Malleson in his *French in India*.

their efforts to hold India against the English, the destiny of a great country was involved in the contest of a few thousand men.

The battle was stubbornly contested, and Lally, as always, was brave, unfortunate, and ill served. He led the charge of the cavalry in person, but the men were so ill affected that only after much delay would they follow their general. The explosion of a tumbril killed and wounded eighty of Lally's men, and threw the others into confusion. At last the victory of the English was complete, and it was decisive. Arcot, Karical, and other places held by the French were reduced one after another; in September, Coote laid siege to Pondicherri, and it was blockaded by land and sea. The dissensions among the French became more bitter as their condition grew worse. The enemies of Lally charged him with being a traitor, and said that he wanted to sell the city to the English. In return he erected gibbets about the town, on which he declared he would hang those who disobeyed his orders and fomented disturbance. Even if the garrison had been zealous, instead of discordant, the fall of the town was certain unless Aché's fleet came to its relief. But Aché remained quietly at the Isle of France, and after four months of siege, starvation compelled Pondicherri to yield. The inhabitants had eaten the horses and camels, the dogs and the rats, before Lally would consent to yield. Four ounces of rice and two of bad flour were the daily allowance for a soldier, and rats were selling at twenty-four francs apiece, when on the 16th of January, 1761, Pondicherri surrendered to the English.[1] Lally and eleven

[1] *Mém. pour Lally*, i. 279. For the siege of Pondicherri, and the battle of Wandewash, see also the *Journal* of Lawrence and Orme.

hundred soldiers, the remains of the French army in India, became prisoners of war, and Pondicherri was razed to the ground.

The destruction of Pondicherri marked the end of the power of France in the East Indies; the scattering possessions which the French still held were captured without difficulty; the French and not the English, to use Lally's phrase, were exterminated from the Coromandel coast. By the treaty of Paris, Pondicherri, Chandarnagar, and some other ports were restored to France, and they are still French possessions. But they have remained places of little importance, doing a small trade, contributing little to the wealth of France, and exercising no influence on the development of India. Since 1761, France cannot be called even the rival of England in the East Indies.

It is not without a certain satisfaction that we read of the final extinction of the French Company of the East Indies, whose affairs had been conducted with such short-sighted greed, and which, as Voltaire said, had carried on war and commerce with equal folly. Its Indian trade was annihilated by the war, and it did not again become important after the treaty of Paris. The profits of the tobacco monopoly, which it had obtained in the days of Law, enabled it to struggle on for a few years, but it could not continue to carry on business unless it received important assistance from the government, and the government decided that nothing in the experience of the past justified it in furnishing further aid to a bankrupt and mismanaged corporation. In 1769, the trade with the posts then held by France in India was thrown open to all citizens, and soon after the Company of the East Indies, an enterprise devised by

Richelieu and organized by Colbert, which had received the patronage of Louis XIV., and been part of Law's scheme for revolutionizing the trade of the world, ceased to exist.[1]

The last years of French occupation in India were inglorious for the nation and discreditable to the government; they furnished the occasion, also, for a judicial murder, which is a reproach to French jurisprudence. Lally's administration was unfortunate, and his conduct not free from blame. If his mistakes had cost him the favor of the court, if his hopes of a marshal's baton had been disappointed, he would have had no cause for complaint. Other French generals had indeed made far more serious mistakes than any of which Lally was guilty, and they still enjoyed all the honors that the crown could bestow. The Duke of Richelieu should have been court-martialed: he was rewarded with an important government and the lifelong favor of the king. Soubise subjected the French to one of the most disgraceful defeats in their history, yet Mme. de Pompadour secured him a place in the ministry and a pension of fifty thousand francs as a compensation for incapacity. But continued defeats both in the East and the West had irritated the public, and a victim was demanded. India had been lost as the result of negligence and bad judgment extending over many years; if the punishment had been properly awarded, it would have been visited upon an administration which had been indifferent to the national honor and the national prosperity. But Lally was the commander when Pondicherri surrendered, and the French officials united in holding him responsible for all the misfortunes

[1] *Edicts*, August, 1769, February, 1775.

that had befallen the colony. The unfortunate general was released on his parole and returned to France, and on his arrival he was greeted by a formidable outcry. Friends advised him to fly before an irritated popular sentiment, but he said that any investigation must result in vindicating his honor, and he faced his enemies with his wonted courage.

He was thrown into the Bastille, and five years elapsed before judgment was rendered in his case. Innumerable charges were brought against him, and they ranged in gravity from betraying Pondicherri to using bad language. The course of the prosecution showed how the rules of French jurisprudence might result in gross injustice. If the common law sometimes excludes evidence that might properly influence an intelligent mind, the laxity of the French court led to a worse failure of justice. A Jesuit priest, called Father Lavaur, had been an active intriguer in Indian politics. He had kept, as was said, two diaries, one favorable to Lally and the other accusing him of every crime. The priest died, and the diary hostile to Lally was received in evidence as proof of the facts which it alleged, and it was the document which had most weight with the judges.[1] Other testimony, by which an officer was to be convicted of high treason, was of a similar nature. One witness testified that it was a matter of public notoriety at Pondicherri that Lally had ordered two bastions to be blown up, and that his engineer had refused to obey such a command. Another said he had been told by many parties that Lally sold the stores of the garrison for his own benefit.[2] In truth, the

[1] *Mém. pour Lally.*
[2] *Ib.*, ii. 205, 6.

charges of treason and corruption were absurd, and were not supported by a grain of credible evidence. Lally had devoted himself to the service of France in India with the bravery and the self-sacrifice that he had always shown in a military career extending over fifty years; if he had made mistakes as a commander, it was for a court-martial of officers to consider them. Instead of that, judges of the Parliament, who hardly knew a culverin from a carabine, investigated Lally's conduct as a soldier; they assumed to decide whether he had placed his cannon judiciously at the siege of Madras, or manœuvred his troops properly at the battle of Wandewash.

Three years were occupied in these investigations, and the judges still hesitated as to their verdict. But popular clamor decided Lally's fate; he was at last found guilty of exactions, of abuse of authority, and of having betrayed the interests of the king, and he was condemned to death.

It was with amazement that an officer who had exposed his life on fifty battlefields received a sentence which condemned him for having betrayed the interests of his country. Louis XV. was asked to remit the sentence, and there was never a more proper occasion for royal clemency. During all his life, the king had shown himself indifferent to the corruption of officials and the inefficiency of generals, but on this occasion he resolved to show a Spartan sternness. The rigor with which the English had treated Admiral Byng probably influenced his conduct, and having been lenient to gross offenders, he was now inexorable towards a man who had been unfortunate.[1]

[1] It was said that Louis regarded the sentence of Lally as unjust, but was told that he must show no leniency. If so, it

The injustice of Lally's sentence was aggravated by the brutality with which he was treated. He was not even allowed the punishment of an officer and a gentleman; the cross of the order of St. Louis was torn from his breast, he was insulted by brutal jailers, a gag was put in his mouth as was done with the lowest offenders, he was placed on a cart like a common malefactor, and was thus taken to the Place de la Grève, where a clumsy executioner struck off his head after many blows.[1] So ignominious a fate for a gallant officer excited no popular sympathy. "Lally died like a madman," wrote Mme. du Deffand. "The people were pleased with all that made his punishment ignominious: the cart, the handcuffs, and the gag. . . . He was a great rascal," she added, "and besides he was very disagreeable."[2]

Years afterward, under the reign of Louis XVI., an effort was made to annul this iniquitous sentence. Lally's son, Lally Tollendal, himself destined to a long and honorable career in the service of humanity, of literature, and of liberal government, applied to the royal council to annul a decree which was a reproach to the administration of the law. Voltaire lent the aid of a pen, which was so often employed in the cause of righting the wrong and of relieving the oppressed. These efforts were successful. In 1778, by a unanimous vote, the unjust decree of 1766 was set aside and annulled; but this tardy vindication came too late to benefit the unfortunate victim of a judicial murder.

was another occasion when the king allowed his natural good judgment to be overruled by bad advice.

[1] Lally was executed May 9, 1766.

[2] Mme. du Deffand to Walpole.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REIGN OF MME. DE POMPADOUR.

"During the nineteen years of my reign," Mme. de Pompadour once said, "the expenses of my table were three and a half million livres." Even if the word was used by inadvertence, there was a long period in which one could justly say that Mme. de Pompadour reigned in France; she controlled the conduct of the king, she dictated the choice of ministers, she decided the policy of the state. It was in the years of peace following the close of the war of the Austrian Succession that the power and glory of the favorite were at their height; it was at this time that she ceased to be the king's mistress to become his confidential adviser, his prime minister without the title, and that she exercised her greatest influence on the sovereign and on society.

If her position seemed a brilliant one to those who saw in her the arbiter of fashion and of the policy of the government, no ambitious statesman found his place more full of care and anxiety than this beautiful and frivolous woman. At the beginning, Louis had been attracted by the beauty of the young bourgeoise, but his affections were never strong; only by constantly amusing the king could the favorite retain her influence, and Louis XV. was one of the hardest men in the world to amuse. During all his life, he probably suffered more from ennui than any other man in Europe. The explanation was simple, and

was found in the indolence and selfishness of his character; his defects brought their own punishment; he was interested in nothing and he cared for no one, and, therefore, he was bored by everything and everybody.

Mme. de Châteauroux sought to induce him to play some part in life; she incited him to lead his army, to be a man among men. Her successor, with better judgment, made no such demands on the king; she knew that, sooner or later, any exertion would annoy him, and she decided, more wisely for her own interests, to devote her energies to keeping the sovereign amused. For such an effort she had uncommon resources; with natural taste, some talent, and an active mind, Mme. de Pompadour not only beguiled the weary hours of a bored king, but she exercised on many of the arts an influence not undeserving of attention.

For the stage the favorite had alike inclination and talent, and by her skill as an actress she had excited the admiration of poets and farmers-general, before she was admitted to the society of princes and dukes. She now resolved to organize a theatre which might help to amuse a king weary of life, and which would furnish an opportunity for displaying her own charms in her new surroundings. In 1747, her theatre opened its doors with a representation of Tartuffe, and during the six years of its existence it was an object of more interest to the king and the court than the condition of the French marine or the growth of the French colonies.

At first the room was so small that it would not seat an audience of over forty, and the most illustrious personages often asked in vain for admission.

Afterwards the theatre was enlarged so as to accommodate more spectators, but the opportunity of witnessing a representation was always much sought for. If it was an honor to be allowed to witness the performance, it was a still greater distinction to take part in it. This privilege, however, the manager wisely accorded only to merit; the actors were indeed persons of the highest rank: the dukes of Nivernais and Ayen and Vallière, the Duchess of Brancas, the Countess of Pons, were among the stars of the troupe, but to become a member it was necessary to have talent as well as pedigree. Even the parts of the supernumeraries were in great demand, and as these personages had nothing to do, claims other than artistic merit were recognized. A cabinet minister promised the position of lieutenant to a relative of the favorite's femme de chambre if she could obtain for his son the rôle of the police officer in a representation of Tartuffe. As the officer had only a few lines to recite, Mme. de Pompadour was willing to please her attendant; the minister's son was more profuse in his gratitude than if he had been made a duke, and the needy relative at once received his promotion.[1]

There was plenty of histrionic talent to be found at Versailles, and the career of a courtier was a good training for the stage; he who all his life played a part at Versailles could easily play a part for an hour at Mme. de Pompadour's theatre, and the troupe of the "Petits Cabinets" was by no means to be despised

[1] Mme. du Hausset conducted this intrigue for one of her relatives, and has given an account of it in her memoirs. The Marquis of Voyer, son of the Count of Argenson, was the person who thus procured the privilege of appearing in Mme. de Pompadour's theatre.

even by professionals. Among them all the favorite was preëminent. She had unusual talent as an actress, and in many rôles could have acquitted herself creditably at the Français; she had also a pleasant voice, and sang agreeably in the light operas that were often performed; in every play she was sure to have the leading part, and she deserved it. She was Urania and Venus and Galatea; she was a ravishing Colette, a delightful Constance, a pleasing Lucile; she delighted the audience by the perfection with which she rendered the part of an artless and innocent country maiden; she did well even in the rôle of a vestal virgin. Her dresses were always an artistic triumph, and so was her acting; she had good taste, and she had the treasury of France with which to gratify it; as Venus she appeared in a dazzling combination of blue and silver, a dress worthy of the gods. The king sat in the front row; at his right was the queen, who watched her victorious rival with her usual amiability; the queen was arrayed in a dingy toilette, which made her look old and even less attractive than she was by nature; the contrast between virtue and vice was all in favor of the latter. "You are the most charming woman in France," said the king to the favorite at the close of one of these performances, and so she undoubtedly was.

Mme. de Pompadour could act and sing and dance with equal skill, and she did her utmost to excite the admiration of an audience more illustrious than gathered at any other theatre, and to amuse the bored man for whom all her arts were displayed. "The mistress of the king has become a dancer and a leaper," said indignant pamphleteers; "she is a modern Herodias;" but the voice of such protests did

not disturb the audience at the theatre of the "Petits Cabinets."[1]

Mme. de Pompadour won her greatest triumphs on the stage, but she interested herself in other fields. She was sincerely fond of art; if her taste was not severe, it was better than that of most of her contemporaries; whoever had a fine jewel, a choice engraving, a magnificent watch, presented it to the critical judgment of the favorite; on all these things she could discourse, not profoundly, but easily and agreeably.[2] The manufacture of porcelain at Sèvres was begun during the reign of the marquise, and her patronage and advice did much to assist in its development. Artistic objects of every kind attracted her interest; from the list of her purchases, the statues and bronzes and vases, the glass and the porcelain, the costly paintings, the rare books, the ornaments and decorations of every sort, that adorned her many châteaux and hermitages and hotels, one could almost write a history of the French art of the period.[3]

Not only did she buy the work of others, but she was herself an artist of respectable merit. She worked assiduously at engraving, and in the catalogue of her productions we find Louis XV. engraved in onyx and represented as a Roman emperor; Louis XV. in coralline as the God of the Arts; Louis XV. in sardoin as Hercules, for whose favor Peace and Victory

[1] Full accounts of the plays represented at the theatre of the "Petits Cabinets" are given by the Duke of Luynes. Luynes belonged to the faction of the queen, but he admits the talents of Mme. de Pompadour as an actress. See, also, Julien, *Théâtre de Mme. de Pompadour.*

[2] *Mém. de Cheverny*, 169.

[3] A list of these can be found in *Livre Journal* of Lazare Duvaux, marchand bijoutier ordinaire du roy.

strive; France and Austria treading discord under foot and joining hands at the altar of fidelity, and many other works, all inscribed "Pompadour Sculp."[1] Perhaps the touch of some other artist at times perfected the work of the favorite, but unlike the poor queen, who bungled whatever she undertook, the marquise was sure to acquit herself creditably whether she was acting Venus at the "Petits Cabinets" or delineating the heroic features of Louis XV. with her burin.

As she was interested in all the decorative arts, so in most of them she set the fashion for others. For few persons have such a prodigious number of things been named: there were Pompadour carriages and sofas and fans; Pompadour chairs and mirrors and chimney-places; there were even Pompadour toothpicks; there are still toilettes and headdresses, porcelain and roses, "à la Pompadour." The taste of her age was not pure, but of it she was the best interpreter; the intricate ornaments, the elaborate decorations, the powdered locks and painted cheeks, were all in keeping with this queen of rococo.

Her beauty needed no disguising, but in that age nature was not deemed charming unless it was aided by art. Two million pots of paint, it was estimated, were required each year to brighten the cheeks of French women; not only ladies of the court and of the demimonde, but wives of staid judges and of plain shopkeepers, made use of it to add to their charms.[2]

The few who sought to eschew it were regarded at Versailles as innovators more hardy than the Encyclopædists; cheeks without paint seemed as strange as

[1] Documents inédits de Guay, et notes sur les œuvres de la marquise de Pompadour.

[2] Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, ix., Brochure of Chev. d'Elbee.

heads without powder. Marie Leszczynski, reared in seclusion and the strictest piety, looked with horror, on her first arrival at court, upon the painted cheeks which to her unsophisticated mind savored of excessive worldliness if not of vice, but the queen of France had to yield obedience to the laws of fashion. At Rome, paint was forbidden to the ladies who were presented to the Pope, and when the Duchess of Nivernais, the wife of the French ambassador, returned from there, she announced her resolution to follow the pious regulations of the papacy and eschew the paint-pot. If she had announced her determination to appear at Versailles in the dress now adopted by members of the Salvation Army and to rebuke Louis XV. for his sins, she would have caused no more excitement. The matter assumed the importance of a question of state. Her husband was still at Rome, and letters from dukes and marquises, from Duras, Mirabeau, and others, were hastily dispatched to prevent so rash a step. It was not left for the women to debate the question; it was of sufficient importance to demand the attention of the men. "I cannot think there is any just ground for slighting the usage," wrote one; "we are all extremely grieved." Her mother hastened to meet the duchess, carrying a paint-pot and exhorting her to use it. Mme. de Nivernais was firm, but her husband saw the question of rouge was not one to be trifled with; a special messenger rode in hot haste from Rome with a letter in which the duchess was admonished to follow the counsels of her friends, and she yielded.[1] The world of Versailles was a painted world, and Mme. de Pompadour was its queen.

[1] Some of these letters are published in Perey's *Un petit neveu de Mazarin.*

Unfortunately there were darker sides to the character of the woman who so long charmed Louis XV. Never even in French history did a royal favorite consume such prodigious sums of money; statisticians have calculated what it cost to support the splendor and to gratify the whims of Mme. de Pompadour; their estimates do not seem exaggerated, and they are in large part confirmed by the figures which she herself furnished. During the nineteen years of what she called her reign, the favorite received from the French treasury thirty-six million livres. This was almost at the rate of two million livres a year, and was one twelfth of the entire revenues of Prussia at the time that Frederick II. succeeded to the throne. Considering the relative value of money, two million dollars in our days, annually during almost twenty years, would not be greatly in excess of the amount spent by the king's mistress.[1]

This great sum was not all spent in ordinary expenditures nor in amusements. The marquise estimated the cost of voyages and fêtes during the period of her favor at four millions, of her kitchen at three and a half millions, and of servants' wages at a little over one million. But she had a taste for lands and châteaux, and this absorbed larger sums than all her other pomp and extravagance. Near Dreux she had a château with magnificent grounds; at Meudon was the charming château of Belle Vue, where for many years the representations of her theatre were held, and in a little dependance of which the treaty of alliance between France and Austria was agreed upon; she had so-called hermitages near Versailles and Fontainebleau and Compiègne, in order that the king might

[1] *Relévé des dépenses de Mme. de Pompadour,* Le Roi.

enjoy the luxury of occasionally stopping at a modest country place instead of an enormous palace. In Paris, Louis's liberality obtained for his favorite what was then known as the Hôtel d'Evreux and is now the Elysée, the official residence of the President of the French republic.

Mme. de Pompadour did more harm to the cause of royalty in France than spending money on palaces and fêtes. Notwithstanding the apparent splendor of her life, the triumphs of her theatre, and the beauties of her châteaux, this frivolous woman led as anxious and agitated an existence as Richelieu or Mazarin; quite as much as those statesmen, she was in constant fear of losing favor, and she was continually watching lest some successful rival should obtain the king's confidence and cause her overthrow. "My life is like that of the Christian," said the marquise, choosing a curious simile; "it is a perpetual contest."

It was the fear of her own overthrow that accounted for the most shameful things in Mme. de Pompadour's career. As she grew older, she became infirm in health, and she realized how slight was her hold on a fickle character like Louis XV. "If the king found some one else with whom he could talk about his hunting and his affairs," she said, "at the end of three days he would not know the difference if I were gone." She knew the king too well to believe that he would ever lead a reputable life, and to avoid the danger of a rival who might push her from her place, she was glad if his attention could be occupied by low-born and ignorant girls from whom she had nothing to fear. The amount of money spent in the support of the *parc aux cerfs*, and the number of sultanas whom it sheltered, have been grossly exaggerated, but the

ignominy of such practices remains the same. The so-called *parc aux cerfs* was a small house in a back street in Versailles, in the quarter once used as a deer park. It had but few occupants, and in 1771 it was sold. But during a number of years the king, now becoming an old man, had a succession of mistresses, mostly young girls of low birth and poor education, for whom this house furnished an asylum. They received no recognition at court; if they had children, the parentage was not acknowledged, and after a while they were retired on meagre pensions, which were, however, sufficient to secure a husband in the provinces.[1] Nothing could have been more squalid, more vulgar, or more low; to such a groveling depth of nastiness had the Lord's anointed sunk.

If such practices secured Mme. de Pompadour's continuance in power, they increased the hatred with which she had long been regarded, and involved the king in such contempt as had never been felt for a French monarch; by an unusual combination, wrote Chesterfield, Louis XV. was both hated and despised.

Whatever were the means by which Mme. de Pompadour retained her hold, for more than ten years following the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle she filled the place of prime minister in the infirm government of Louis XV. Her activity was prodigious; she labored as assiduously as any hard-working secretary. "It is now late," she tells her father, "and I have still sixty letters to write."[2] For the most part the favorite did not concern herself with the details of administration; she exerted indeed a considerable influence upon the great question of the Austrian alliance, but as a

[1] *Mém. de Hausset*, 77–91.

[2] *Correspondance de Mme. de Pompadour avec son père.*

general rule her conception of government was that of many a modern politician; the important question was who should get the offices. In this respect her policy was a simple one: she wished all places of importance filled by her friends; of their capacity she was not able to judge, nor did she trouble herself with the question.

The changes in the ministry under Mme. de Pompadour were likened to the transformation scenes of a theatre; ministers were disgraced or were transferred from one bureau to another with startling rapidity. In 1749, Maurepas was removed from the ministry of the marine, which he had filled for thirty years, because he wrote some offensive verses about the favorite. Certainly they were vulgar verses for a gentleman to write, but well-bred people then said things which are not now allowed in polite society. At all events, they did not affect his ability to perform his duties, but they cost him his position. Machault, who was one of the favorite's protégés, was first made comptroller general, and then transferred to the marine, and a few years later disgraced because he had become lukewarm in the cause of his patroness. Bernis was made minister of foreign affairs in 1757 because he enjoyed the confidence of Mme. de Pompadour; he was removed a year later for advising a policy of which she disapproved. The Count of Argenson, who had been minister of war for fourteen years, and was one of the ablest of the king's advisers, was disgraced at the beginning of the Seven Years' war because he persistently refused the favorite's overtures. The list could be made longer, but the fate of obscure holders of important offices is not worth following.

Before the close of the Seven Years' war, the part taken by Mme. de Pompadour in public affairs became less active than it once had been. Though Choiseul entered the king's councils as her friend, he was a man of imperious temperament, and he soon occupied a different position from the ministers she had so easily elevated or overthrown. Moreover, her health was failing, and her aspirations were disappointed. Frivolous as she was in character, yet she had cherished an ambition for political fame; if she could not be a successor to Richelieu, at least she had hoped to hold a place in the affections of the French people like that of Agnes Sorel. These hopes had been blighted; she had found by bitter experience that forming political combinations and carrying on wars was more serious business than playing in the theatre of the "Petits Cabinets." The Austrian alliance proved a disappointment, the war against Frederick ended in defeat and disgrace, and for the humiliations which the nation suffered it vented its anger upon the favorite. She was held responsible for the choice of incompetent generals, for disorders in the finances, and for the condition of vulgar vice and apathetic indifference into which the king was sunk, and to a large extent she was responsible.

It is the lot of those in power to receive threatening letters, and during the series of disasters which began at Rossbach, Mme. de Pompadour's mail became disagreeable. Each day she received anonymous letters charging her with every crime, and invoking upon her every punishment. The mortification of defeat distressed her more than threats of violence; she could get no sleep except by the use of drugs; she was plunged into a despair that was not altogether

ignoble. "The disease of which I shall die," she said one day, "will be chagrin."[1] Not alone the loss of her beauty, and anxiety lest some rival should gain her place, helped to ruin the favorite's health and bring her to an early grave; mortification at the disgrace in which she had involved France, humiliation that her name should be identified with defeat and disaster, instead of with glory and victory, had their part in the melancholy of her later years and hastened her end.

The years which followed the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle were filled with literary activity and social change, but politically they were not important. The beginnings of the contest between England and France belong properly to the Seven Years' war, which grew out of them; the efforts of Maria Theresa to form an alliance with the Bourbons only became important when the conduct of Frederick a few years later insured their success. Changes in public feeling, under the influence of free discussion and of a literature trammeled only in form, were indeed going on with rapidity during all the latter years of Louis XV.'s reign, but they did not as yet affect the administration of the government. Almost the only political measures that have any permanent interest are the attempts made to subject church property to taxation.

If the Revolution found the French political system little changed from what it had been a century before, it was not because there was a lack of attempts at amendment, but their history is almost a uniform record of failure. So important was the influence of the church in the French social system, that it may be well to follow with some detail the endeavors made

[1] *Mém. de Mme. du Hausset*, 124, 149, etc.

to deprive it of some privileges which it had long enjoyed, and to consider the character of the clergy by whom those efforts were successfully resisted.

Peace is usually welcome, but the peace which closed the war of the Austrian Succession was unpopular in France. The events of the war had on the whole been favorable. Fontenoy and Lawfeldt were the most brilliant victories gained by French armies during the long period between the day when Luxembourg defeated William III. at Steinkirk and the day when Dumouriez defeated Brunswick at Valmy. For these successes France had nothing to show except a considerable increase in debt; her own boundaries had not been enlarged, and the principalities ceded to Louis's son-in-law, the Bourbon prince of Spain, were rated by the French people at their just value to themselves, and that was nothing at all. The announcement, therefore, that some of the war taxes were to be continued indefinitely, and that a further loan was needed to settle the arrears of indebtedness, was received with sullen discontent. An attempt was made to render these impositions more equitable, and this at least met with public approval, but the government was unable to modify its ancient principles, and a laudable effort resulted in a lamentable failure. It deserves consideration, for it involved the questions of privilege which were deeply seated in the French system, and it illustrated the change in public sentiment which ere long was to result in the destruction of all privileges.

In 1749, Machault was comptroller general. The national debt had been largely increased during the late war, and the principles of economy which enabled Fleury to balance the budget were no longer in vogue.

It was certain that a minister who owed his position to Mme. de Pompadour's favor would not hold it long if he insisted on any large reduction in the expenses of the court. Machault was, however, an intelligent man and possessed of considerable boldness, and he resolved on a vigorous endeavor to subject to taxation some part of the wealth of the kingdom, which thus far had escaped. In that year an edict was issued imposing a tax of five per cent. on all incomes without regard to any privilege or exemption.[1] The proceeds were devoted to the payment of the debt incurred during the war, and the preamble stated that this imposition was chosen in preference to any other, because it was equal and just and fell on all subjects of the crown in proportion to their ability to pay.[2] Income taxes had been several times imposed, and to this edict of 1749 the nobility as an order made no opposition; and yet, even when it was admitted in theory that a particular tax should fall upon the rich in the same proportion as upon the poor, it was impossible to enforce this in practice. So imperfect was the assessment for purposes of taxation that a person of influence could easily escape a large share of the burden. "Your tender heart," wrote a nobleman to an official, "would never consent that a father of my rank should be taxed strictly for the twentieth, like one of the common people."[3] Such appeals, when backed by rank and social influence, rarely failed to be efficacious. One instance of the mode of assessment under a similar tax, also imposed for war purposes, will show how the rich in great part escaped the burden. The pres-

[1] Edict of May, 1749.

[2] *Anc. lois fran.*, xxii. 225.

[3] Cited by De Tocqueville, *L'ancien régime.*

ident, Ségur, was the owner of extensive vine lands, and received from them an income of at least one hundred and sixty thousand livres. In 1734, after much wrangling, he was assessed for sixteen thousand; in the following year he obtained a reduction to twelve thousand; not satisfied with that, he wrote one of the ministers, who ordered it to be reduced to ten thousand; in 1748, by dint of persistence, the assessment had been worked down to four thousand livres.[1] This is not an extreme instance; a tax which nominally fell upon the privileged classes became almost a derisory impost so far as they were concerned. "The capitation," Turgot wrote in 1767, "which it was intended should be borne by all, and from which the nobility is not exempt by law, practically falls upon those subject to the taille. In the generality of Limoges the nobility is highly taxed, if one compares their contributions with those paid by nobles of equal fortune in other provinces, but if the capitation paid by a gentleman is compared with that paid by a peasant, it will be seen that the gentlemen pay in so different a proportion that it amounts practically to exemption from a tax which the law intended to impose on all subjects of the king."[2]

The position of the clergy was different; their exemption from taxation, if not unquestioned, had never been successfully attacked, and they would not concede any right in the crown to subject them to this imposition; they were a united and a powerful body, they had to deal with a weak and timorous king, and they now opposed with uncompromising resistance the

[1] Orry to Boucher, 1734, 1735, etc., cited by Fourcade, *Le dixième dans la généralité de Guyenne.*

[2] Turgot to Ormesson, August 10, 1767.

policy which Machault sought to enforce. Quarter of a century before, an attempt had been made to subject the property of the church to taxation; it had failed, nor was it strange that such an endeavor at the beginning of the reign of Louis XV. should have been unsuccessful. The exemption of church property from ordinary taxation had for centuries been a part of the institutions of the kingdom. It had been recognized at the court of Charlemagne and unquestioned by the parliaments of Philip the Fair; that the property held by the church should not be seized by the sacrilegious hand of the state had been repeatedly declared by Louis XIV., and had been solemnly acknowledged by Louis XV.; so far as France could be regarded as having any fixed constitution independent of the will of the king, the immunity of church property from taxation formed a part of it. It was held for the service of God, and only a godless ruler would claim that the state could impose upon it the same burdens as upon property held by the merchant or the husbandman for his private gain and profit.

Yet the necessities of the state had often been severe, and the wealth of the church had always been great, and this exemption had been purchased at the cost of free-will offerings, so-called, which a loyal clergy voted for the aid of their king. Not only were such offerings granted by the consent of those who had to pay them, but they were far less than the contributions exacted from other property of equal value. The church owned one fourth of the French soil, and two hundred million livres is a low estimate of the income which the clergy derived from their own land and from the tithes which they levied on the land of others. Their contribution to the needs of the state

was insignificant; while it was estimated that the direct taxes took almost one half of the produce of a piece of land belonging to a peasant, the amount of the annual gift voted by the clergy during the eighteenth century averaged less than four million livres a year. Owning one fourth of the soil, the church did not pay more than one thirtieth of the direct taxes; it is safe to say that the burden of taxation on a peasant was twenty times as heavy as on a priest.[1] Allowing for errors in calculations which it is impossible to make exact, the disproportion was enormous.

An attempt to disregard privileges so long respected would not have been made if the ministry had not represented feelings which began to agitate the community. "These pretended privileges," wrote a Parisian, whose views always closely reflected the change in popular sentiment, "are visionary. The impositions on property should be divided among all the

[1] *Collection des procès verbaux du clergé.* This annual gift did not include certain contributions to the rentes of the Hôtel de Ville and other purposes, nor the payments made by the *clergé étranger* of Artois, Flanders, Alsace, and other provinces which had been recently added to France. Against this must be reckoned the amount contributed by the king towards paying the interest on the debt which the clergy had incurred for some of its advances. In a recent article in the *Revue des Questions Historiques*, the writer seeks to show that the contributions of the clergy during the reign of Louis XV. and Louis XVI. amounted to as much as seven per cent. of their revenues. Even if these figures were correct, the contribution paid by a bishop with an income of one hundred thousand livres would not have been one seventh as heavy proportionally as that paid by a peasant who earned five hundred livres. But this percentage can only be obtained by undervaluing the wealth of the French church. The estimates made by Taine and Avenel are far more accurate.

subjects of the king in proportion to what each has. In England the lands of the clergy, the nobility, and of the third estate pay equally and without distinction. Nothing is more just." [1] Such views would have found no utterance a century before, and they indicate a newly developed desire for equality before the law, a feeling which gained strength in France much later than in England.

Apart from this, the hold of the church upon the people was weaker than in the seventeenth century, and in considering this change of sentiment it is well to examine somewhat the condition of the Gallican clergy during the reign of Louis XV. While the diminished influence exercised by the church was in part due to the skeptical literature that began to assume importance, yet the clergy themselves made success easy for their assailants. If the bitterness with which Voltaire and his followers attacked religion is now distasteful, even to those who have discarded any religious belief, it must be remembered that the organization which embodied Christianity in the days of Voltaire was very different from any organization that now calls itself Christian. Certainly the character of the higher clergy had deteriorated, when we compare them with their predecessors in the century before. Not only were the great men lacking, not only had the Bossuets and Fénelons left no successors, but the influences which controlled the selection of men for the highest clerical offices had changed; their holders were less liberal and more worldly; the era of persecution, of which the revocation of the Edict of Nantes formed a part, left its marks for evil on the clergy of the dominant church.

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, August, 1750.

The early part of the seventeenth century witnessed the establishment of the Oratory, and the exhaustless charities of St. Vincent de Paul; it developed men of powerful thought and stern piety like St. Cyran and Arnauld, and the inmates of Port Royal and La Trappe. There were no such manifestations in the Gallican church during the century which followed the revocation of the edict. The influence of the Jesuits grew stronger, and the higher dignities fell to those who were willing to be their docile pupils. In a large degree the great benefices were bestowed as marks of favor and not as rewards of capacity. The energies of the church, instead of being given to the work of charity or to the cause of pure religion, were chiefly consumed in a bitter struggle to crush out the relics of Jansenism by compelling all to accept the dogmas of the Unigenitus. The clergy manifested more zeal in persecuting heretics than in purifying morals.

These attempts at persecution excited a constant opposition in the community. The French mind has never shown any marked interest in metaphysical subtleties, and certainly no one would for a moment believe that Parisians of the eighteenth century were really disturbed by questions concerning predestination or preserving grace, but the persistence with which a majority of the clergy refused the privileges of religion to those who would not accept one hundred and one propositions that no one understood, not even the Pope who had pronounced them, weakened the hold which the church had once possessed. At the same time that the French clergy were resisting any attempt to subject their property to the laws which affected the property of their fellows, they sought to

stir into new activity the odious regulations against the Protestants. In 1750, at the request of some of the bishops, troops were sent into the Cevennes to surprise Protestant gatherings in the wilderness; a few of these outcasts for their faith were shot, and one clergyman was captured and hanged. During the eight years preceding, six hundred Protestants had been imprisoned for various offenses against the dominant creed. These persecutions were indeed sporadic, but if the dragonnades of Louvois were not repeated, it was not from lack of exhortation on the part of the clergy.

There were other reasons for the lower estimation in which the church was held, and these were found in the character and conduct of many of its clergy. For the most part these strictures must be confined to the higher clergy, but naturally what impressed the community was the conduct of the great ecclesiastical dignitaries. A curé of Tours might furnish a pattern of the most edifying Christian conduct, but if the Bishop of Tours was a man of worldly life, wasting great revenues in profane pleasures, and spending more time in Mme. de Pompadour's chamber at Versailles than in ministering to his flock in Touraine, the evil of the one example far outdid any benefit that might be derived from the other.

The lower clergy at this period were often ignorant, but with few exceptions they were sincere in their faith and zealous in their ministrations. They were not stimulated by the hope of temporal advantages, for the miserable pay received by most of the curés and vicars was a reproach to the church. As is often the case when some members of a religious establishment receive compensation which is out of proportion

to any work they do, others are left in a condition of more than apostolic poverty. The inadequate provision made for the inferior clergy in France had long excited the attention of the laity, without at all disturbing the composure of ecclesiastical dignitaries. As far back as 1614, the last States General had complained of the poverty in which the humble workers in the church were left, and had asked that an income of at least two hundred livres should be secured to every village curé. A century and a half passed, and the position of the lower clergy was no better; a large proportion of curés received less than five hundred francs a year, and many of the vicars received less than two hundred, and of this small allowance a larger percentage went in charity than was contributed by many bishops who added to the great revenues of their sees the emoluments of half a dozen abbeys. Voltaire's curé, who, for forty ducats a year, had to work by night and day, in the heat of the sun and in the rain and snow, who was often required to go long distances from his beggarly home, and found no respite from severe and exhausting labor, was not an exaggerated case.

In marked contrast with the lot of these ill-paid and overworked priests was the condition of the rulers of the church, who now protested against contributing from their superfluity to the burdens of the state. In the eighteenth century, even more than in the seventeenth, the higher clergy were members of the aristocracy. In 1789, the Almanach Royal gives us the names of one hundred and thirty French bishops, and every one was of noble family; there were Rochefoucaulds and Rohans and Talleyrands, but there were none of humble birth. Such had not been the tradi-

tion of the Catholic Church; for centuries no great organization had been so democratic, in no other institution had so many worked their way to the largest influence and the highest honors by mere force of intellect and by fitness for their work. Even under Louis XIV., in religious as in political office, the choice was much less restricted than under his successor; in his reign the nobility complained, and not without some justice, that at times their rank operated as a hindrance to their preferment. There was no ground for such complaints under Louis XV., and plebeian bishops became unknown.

As with the bishoprics, so with the important and lucrative ecclesiastical offices; in the eighteenth century, these were regarded as good things which should be reserved for the upper classes. "Abbeys are intended for people of quality," said Boyer, the Bishop of Mirepoix, to a plebeian applicant.[1] It is curious that in the latter part of Louis XV.'s reign, when books extolling equality were read and praised by persons of rank, as much as by discontented and ambitious plebeians, preferment, both in the army and in the church, was reserved for the aristocracy with a strictness previously unknown in France.

Certainly, the fact that a man was a gentleman by birth, that his ancestors had led armies in the Holy Land and ruled provinces in France, that his kinsmen were dukes and princes, did not unfit him to be a pious and a faithful bishop, and no more did it fit him to become one. There was no reason that a bishop should not be a gentleman by birth, and on the other hand, the mere fact that he was a gentleman

[1] Bernis, *Mém.*, i. 83; *Mém. de Rochefoucauld*, i. 117; *Mém. d'Augeard, Campan*, etc.

was no reason for making him a bishop. The higher clergy under Louis XV. had the virtues and the vices of the order to which they belonged by birth, and when great ecclesiastical offices became the patrimony of a social class, it was inevitable that many of the incumbents should be more interested in their temporalities than in their duties.

The rewards were so great that they might well satisfy even those who desired the utmost of worldly pomp and display. In the eighteenth century, the average incomes of the one hundred and thirty bishops of France can be stated at one hundred thousand livres, and at a low estimate this would be equivalent to two hundred thousand francs or forty thousand dollars at the present date.[1] The revenues of the eighteen archbishops were still larger. The archbishopric of Paris was worth three hundred thousand livres, that of Cambrais half as much, and the man holding one of these great sees was a poor courtier if he did not obtain the gift of numerous abbeys and livings, with which to increase the regular emoluments of his office. In 1788, the Almanach Royal tells us that the Archbishop of Norbonne added to one hundred and sixty thousand livres from his see one hundred and twenty thousand from his abbeys. The Archbishop of Rouen supplemented his episcopal income of one hundred thousand, by one hundred and thirty thousand from other livings. The list could be continued, and in this respect there was no difference between the conditions which prevailed in 1788 and half a century earlier.

The wealth of some ecclesiastics far exceeded even

[1] There were some bishoprics of which the income was small, but these were exceptional.

these figures. The bishopric of Strasburg was almost hereditary in the great family of Rohan. In 1780, the income of Cardinal Rohan, who then held that see, was over eight hundred thousand livres; his palace at Strasburg was exceeded in magnificence by few in France; he could entertain seven hundred guests in it, and often all of these accommodations were required by his lavish hospitality; one hundred and eighty horses stood in his stables; his frequent entertainments were marked by more splendor than those of the wealthy laity, and by quite as little decorum.[1] At Rome, Cardinal Bouillon had twenty-nine pages and sixty valets to support his dignity. Bernis, though he gave more heed to rendering life agreeable for his guests by the charms of the conversation than by the splendor of the surroundings, maintained an establishment for the expense of which five hundred thousand livres barely sufficed. A bishop was a grand seigneur; his life and his traditions were those of a wealthy and worldly aristocracy.

Most of the bishops and archbishops were indeed decorous in their conduct and sincere in their faith. The evil livers were comparatively few, yet even with the most creditable members of the higher clergy, the size of their incomes and the splendor of their lives made their position very different from that now occupied by the hard-working and poorly paid episcopate of France.

As these dignities were bestowed by favor, there was a large proportion of young bishops; if a man was to become a bishop at all, he generally received his promotion before he was forty, and frequently when much younger. Not often was a priest elevated

[1] *Mém. de Valfons; Mém. de Georgel.*

to this dignity when past fifty; the office was regarded as a benefit to be bestowed by the monarch on his faithful nobility, and not as a reward for service in the work of the church, and the man whose rank entitled him to ask for such a position usually obtained it early in his career.

It would be unfair to judge a body of men by the conduct of some members, yet when the higher clergy were thus recruited, it would have been impossible that their modes of thought and life should greatly differ from those of their class. The younger son of a nobleman was chosen to represent the family in the church. If the older brother died, the future bishop would become a duke instead; he would exchange the church for the army, and he would be quite as well fitted for the latter profession as the former. But if he did not succeed to the family titles and honors, he chose religion as a vocation, and by the time he was twenty, he was given a well-endowed abbey. The duties were nominal, and, if the income was sufficient, the abbé passed his days at the court, leading a life which differed little from that of his brother, the colonel. If he made his way, he soon became a royal almoner; he was on good terms with the favorite; occasionally he pronounced a sermon in the royal chapel, in which well-turned sentences were interspersed with judicious references to Louis the Well Beloved. At thirty-five, our abbé became a bishop with an income of one hundred thousand livres; he might lead a life free from scandal, but his career had not fitted him to exercise any strong religious influence upon his flock.

It was natural that many bishops should form a part of the court at Versailles, like the other members of the noble families to which they belonged and from

which they were chosen. In 1750, one fourth of the French bishops are reported as having their residence at Versailles and not in their dioceses, and of those who nominally resided among their flocks, many found relief from the tedium of provincial existence by long stays in the more congenial atmosphere of the court. As we read of some of these great ecclesiastics, we are not surprised that their spiritual influence was small. It was not often that these worldly prelates found time for episcopal visits, and when they could no longer be postponed, the bishop went the rounds of his diocese, drawn by six horses, with officers riding in front to announce the approach of his eminence. The spectacle was splendid, but not spiritual. At the palace of the Bishop of Langres there was music twice a week, and the gambling-table always stood ready for the amusement of his guests. The charms of the episcopal palace of Viviers, when occupied by Lafont de Savins, were often told. Both taste and money had been liberally expended in adding to the attractions of the grounds; the bishop had even seen to it that the groves should be thickly stocked with nightingales; within the palace music and dancing went on until late, the beautiful sister of a neighboring abbé was prominent in all entertainments, and the manner in which she sang romances and accompanied them on the harp always gave great pleasure to the guests.[1] The Bishop of Troyes celebrated the restoration of his nephew to health by the performance of a comic opera at his home.[2] The Bishop of Mans was an ardent sportsman, and one Sunday, when hunting, he met a procession marching with cross and banner

[1] *Le Schisme constitutionnel dans l'Ardeche.*

[2] *Nouvelles écclesiastiques*, 1762.

and singing the litany of the Virgin; he did not wait, and the bearers of cross and religious symbols had to stop until the bishop of the flock, with his dogs and his huntsmen, had crossed the road.[1] A similar incident occurred to Cardinal Rohan when he was minister at Vienna, and the scandal caused by his riding through a religious procession was among the many grievances Maria Theresa had against him.

A certain analogy can be drawn between the condition of the higher clergy in France not long prior to the Revolution, and the position of many of the great dignitaries among the Italian clergy before the Reformation. We must allow for differences in time and in race. The courtly bishops of Louis XV. were not altogether like the followers of Leo X.; the life of elegant amusement which was led by Cardinal Rohan was not the career of finished scholarship and refined luxury of Cardinal Bembo; the dissipations of the Abbé Count of Clermont were not the vices of a Borgia; but at Paris, as at Rome, there was the same want of strong religious feeling, the same readiness to appropriate the wealth intended for the uses of piety in order to obtain the pleasures of the world, and in both cases the example set by the rulers of the church lessened the hold upon the people of the institution which they represented.[2]

If the bishops often gave little heed to the spiritual welfare of their flocks, still less zeal could be expected from the great body of abbés and inferior dignitaries, who enjoyed a large portion of the revenues of the

[1] *Histoire de l'Eglise de Mans*, vi. 528; Campan, *Mém.*, i. 68.

[2] This account of the higher clergy should be confined to the reign of Louis XV.; even during the short reign of Louis XVI., there was some improvement in their average character.

church without the pretense of taking any part in church work. It would be unfair to take the career of the Abbé Count of Clermont as a specimen of the French clergy, for his connection with the church was purely nominal. If as Abbot of St. Germain he supported dancers of the ballet in splendid luxury, he made no pretense to virtue, he was not a priest, he chose the career of a soldier, and took no more part in religious work than Marshal Belle Isle or Maurice de Saxe; but he enjoyed a great share of the church's wealth, for which exemption from taxation was asked because it was needed for God's service. The livings of the Count of Clermont yielded him an income greater than two hundred thousand dollars would be to-day, and this he spent in riotous living. When immunity from the burdens of the state was demanded in behalf of wealth that was squandered on the first lady of the ballet in a manner to scandalize all Paris, it was evident that such claims no longer rested on any just ground, that this talk of exemptions required for God's service was a nauseous falsehood, and it needed no political prophet to see that this condition of things could not much longer endure.

It was bad when the lives of men, who nominally had devoted themselves to religious work, were full of scandal; it was worse when men without religious belief asked for the punishment of those who refused to accept doctrines in which the persecutors themselves had no faith. The Archbishop of Toulouse led a life no more edifying than that of his brother of Mans, and in private he scoffed at the doctrines of Christianity, yet he exhorted the king to finish the work of Louis the Great and blot out all trace of Protestantism from the land; the cry of intolerance,

when it proceeded from those who disregarded the demands of morality and refused to acknowledge the truth of the doctrines they preached, made their position not only anomalous, but odious.[1]

If great ecclesiastical revenues had been required for the support of the clergy, or had been largely employed in charitable works, in the care of the sick and the relief of the poor, the immunity from taxation which they had so long enjoyed would still have had reasons for its existence. But as a rule the poor received a larger proportion of the scanty stipends of the curates than of the great incomes of the princes of the church. "Cardinal Soubise is dead," writes Argenson; "he left three millions in cash and not a sou for the poor."[2] Doubtless many wealthy prelates gave somewhat to good works; in many of the institutions of the regular clergy the ancient traditions of a liberal charity were by no means extinct, but as a rule the wealth of the church was used neither for the greater glory of God nor the greater good of man, except of the few fortunate possessors of opulent bishoprics, rich abbeys, and well-paid ecclesiastical sinecures.[3]

Even within the church the contributions paid the state fell in undue proportion on the poorer members.

[1] It was of the Archbishop of Toulouse that Louis XVI. said, when his claims were urged for the see of Paris, "The Archbishop of Paris must believe in God." Duc de Lévis, *Souvenirs*, 103.

[2] *Journal*, July 6, 1756. The cardinal died at thirty-eight, and his death, so Argenson says, was due to drink and debauchery (ix. 292).

[3] Instances of the reluctance of the wealthy clergy to answer the demands of charity are given in Taine's *L'ancien régime*, and in the cahiers of the States General.

The Bishop of Verdun, with almost sixty thousand livres of revenue, contributed only one hundred and eighty towards the payment of the gift to the king; the chapter of the cathedral of Dijon, with over twenty thousand of income, paid less than three hundred, and the burden of raising the sums voted the government was left so entirely to the poorer clergy that an edict forbade placing an imposition greater than sixty livres on curés whose income did not exceed three hundred.[1] The case of the Bishop of Verdun was probably not an extreme one, and at that rate he paid hardly one quarter of one per cent. on his income, while an obscure curé paid twenty per cent.

Though the church in some degree had lost its hold on the community, its organization was sufficiently strong to defeat the effort now made to subject its property to taxation. The edict of 1749 declared that there should be no exemptions from its provisions, and this was succeeded in the following year by another which required all persons holding property in mortmain to make a public declaration of their revenues, in order to secure a more just contribution towards the needs of the state. Six months were given the clergy in which to report the property they held and the income which it yielded; the six months expired, no reports were made, and there the matter rested.

The assembly of the church met, and the king demanded from it a contribution of seven million five hundred thousand livres; the clergy refused to give anything unless their immunities were ratified and

[1] *Declaration*, 1690; *Délibération du clergé*, 1747; *Mém. de Luynes*, 1754; *Arch. de la Coté d'Or*, cited by Marion, *Machault d'Arnouville*, 222.

their exemption from capitation solemnly recognized. "Is Christ to be subjected to the taille?" asked one prelate. "We will not consent," said others, "that what has been the gift of our respect shall become the tribute of our obedience." It needed more vigorous action than could be expected from the infirm government of Louis XV. to enforce obedience to the demands that were now made; the assembly dispersed without even voting the free gift which had been accorded from time immemorial; as a result of the effort to impose a tax by right, the government lost even the little which it had been wont to receive as a gratuity.

There were also potent influences at the court which helped to thwart Machault's efforts. The minister, said the prelates and confessors who had the ear of the sovereign, was but a tool of the atheists and philosophers who sought to overthrow all religion, and he was seeking to involve the most Christian king in hostility with the church that was the firmest support of his throne. The time had not yet come when the demands of the public, or the writings of skeptics, could prevail against the steadfast opposition of the clerical organization. In 1755, the assembly of the clergy again met, and voted a free gift of sixteen million livres to cover a period of three years; the king thanked his faithful clergy for their loving zeal, and the effort to impose on the church the burdens falling on the rest of the community was not again made under the old régime.

Undoubtedly, if the principle of church immunity had been once done away with, other burdens would have followed the capitation. Even then it would have been the part of wisdom to submit; the stubborn effort made by the clergy and the nobility to hold

privileges which had no further reason for existence, which were unjust and were becoming odious, at last involved them in common disaster; those who had too long held unfair advantages were subjected to spoliation which was equally unjust; those who had refused to share in the public burdens, at last had nothing left for themselves. But a privileged body rarely surrenders its advantages, and the clergy at this time merely failed to display any extraordinary wisdom or extraordinary magnanimity.

The contests with the Parliament extended over a large part of Louis XV.'s reign, and they raged with unusual bitterness in these years of peace. A trouble that had become chronic would hardly need any further reference, were it not that the disobedience of the judges was now marked by unusual boldness of language, and that the conduct of the government was characterized by more than its ordinary vacillation.

The cause of these disputes was found in the ancient quarrel over the Unigenitus, and in the bigotry with which the clergy sought to enforce its acceptance. The Parliament was Jansenist, and so were the Parisian bourgeoisie, while among the clergy the influence of the Jesuits was supreme. Long before, the judges had protested against the refusal of the sacraments to the dying who were unprovided with certificates from a priest, attesting their acceptance of the doctrines of the Unigenitus. A form of persecution, as repulsive to humanity as it was contrary to religion, was strangely out of place at the very time the Encyclopædia was appearing, and the influence of the church was subjected to attacks more dangerous than it had ever been called to withstand. But the Archbishop of Paris was a man whose beliefs were as sin-

cere as they were narrow; he was uncompromising in his views, and one of those who, when born out of due season, are fitted to do the utmost harm to the cause they espouse. He bade his clergy to be severe in examining the orthodoxy of those who asked for the last sacraments, and they were often refused the dying.

Each of these cases aroused the ire of the Parliament, and so frequent were they that the care of souls occupied almost as much of its time as the administration of justice. The curés were admonished by the bishop to be firm in their refusal; the Parliament ordered them to administer the sacraments to the dying who demanded them, and punished disobedience by severe penalties; an offending priest often saw his small effects seized by the bailiff and sold at public vendue because he had obeyed the orders of his archbishop. In this controversy the king at first espoused the cause of the clergy; edicts of the Parliament were annulled by orders of the council; the judges remonstrated, and Louis forbade their interference with matters beyond their jurisdiction. The judges constantly protested their loyalty, but they met the orders of the king with persistent disobedience.

These disputes became important because they excited in a community that sympathized with the courts a spirit of insubordinate questioning of which there had been few traces in the past. The feeling of discontent was fostered, not only by the quarrels with the Parliament, but by the unsatisfactory condition of the national finances, the weight of taxation, the growing contempt for Louis XV.'s character, and, most of all, by the popularity of a literature that questioned the foundations of established forms of government and belief. "The Jansenist party," said Barbier, who

was much in sympathy with them, "is inclined to be republican."[1] Few of them would have admitted this; the very use of the word "republican" when applied to a Frenchman was a novelty, but their opposition to the government was dangerous to institutions of more importance than tickets of confession.

The language of the Parliament does not seem revolutionary to us, yet it was inconsistent with the principles of an absolute monarchy. In the laws and forms of which the tribunals are the depositaries and guardians, said one of their edicts, "is the only certainty for the preservation of a just monarchy, for the safety of the lives and the liberties of the subjects."[2] The complaints of the public were more unrestrained and more personal. "There is no sort of evil and indecent talk that is not heard in Paris about the king," says a Parisian; "they are fanatical against the authority of the sovereign."[3]

In this condition of feeling some foresaw danger for the future, and in 1752, Argenson declared that the changes in public opinion might grow until they produced revolution. But in truth no violent alteration in the form of government was as yet practicable; if a demand for reform could be heard, it was still possible to appease it, and by a modification of existing institutions to prevent their overthrow.

If the courts no longer yielded the prompt obedience which the sovereign demanded, they were encouraged in their resistance by the vacillation of the government. Louis XIV. had suppressed the political activity of the Parliaments with a stern hand, and

[1] Barbier, July, 1752.
[2] *Arrêt*, March 5, 1752.
[3] Barbier, June, 1754; December, 1756.

they submitted to an authority that was resolved to enforce its decrees; but the administration of Louis XV. neither conciliated nor intimidated its adversaries.

In the contest between the church and the judiciary the sympathy of the king was naturally with the clergy; he was a bigoted Catholic, and he had always been surrounded by members of the ultramontane party. The Parliament was repeatedly ordered to abstain from interference with matters of religious doctrine. Little disturbed by such injunctions, it in turn forbade the Archbishop of Paris causing further scandal by refusals to allow the sacraments to be administered to the dying. As he declined to comply with such orders, the officers of the court were bidden to seize his property as a penalty of disobedience, and the peers of the kingdom were invited to meet with the judges and confer on fit measures to be adopted.

These decrees were promptly annulled, and in May, 1753, the judges declared they would attend to no further business, and the courts were closed. The king ordered them to resume their duties, and on their refusal a large number were banished to various parts of the country, and the sittings of the Parliament were transferred to Pontoise. As its members were stubborn in their resolution not to hold sessions anywhere, this measure was not important.

Closing the courts caused serious embarrassment in the large part of France subject to the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Paris. Not only was a stop put to litigation, but thousands of persons were dependent on the courts for their livelihood, and now found themselves without occupation. The judges, with their families, their servants, and many minor officials, removed to Pontoise or their various places of banish-

ment, and the Parisian shopkeepers calculated that they were thus deprived of twenty thousand consumers of their wares.[1]

It was at this time of political agitation that the ill-fated Louis XVI. was born. On the 8th of September, the dauphine gave birth to a second son, who received the title of the Duke of Aquitaine, and who subsequently by his brother's death became the dauphin. The popular discontent over the courts did not prevent the ordinary manifestations of joy at the birth of a son in the royal family. All the houses of the city were illuminated, the hotels were magnificently decorated, and in the public places until late in the night, by a clear moon, the violins twanged and the populace danced and drank. No one who saw the Parisian populace rejoicing over the birth of the new prince, with the river from the Pont Neuf to the Bourbon palace aglow with magnificent illuminations, with crowds alike of bourgeois and nobles watching the popular demonstrations of joy, and an innumerable throng of carriages driving through the streets that their occupants might enjoy the splendor of this demonstration, would have imagined that within forty years, in the same city, this unfortunate child would be executed to satisfy a popular demand for his blood.

The struggle between the courts and the king was long continued; not until late in the following year were the judges recalled from their exile and was the ordinary administration of justice resumed. An endeavor had been made to confer upon a newly created Royal Chamber the jurisdiction which the Parliament refused to exercise, but it met with poor success. The people were attached to the old courts and mistrustful

[1] Barbier, May, 1753; *Mém. de Bernis*, i. 331.

of the new judges; litigants were unwilling to appear before them, and when the members of the Parliament were at last recalled, Louis in substance conceded the points from which the struggle had grown, and they resumed their seats in triumph.

The king now declared by an edict of September, 1754, that there should be an end of these controversies, and forbade all innovations in matters of religion. This was interpreted by the judges as tacitly forbidding tickets of confession, and such practically was the construction put upon it by the administration.

The Archbishop of Paris could no more be silenced by edicts than could the Parliament, and he was now sent into exile for contumacy. He retired to Lagny in compliance with the royal commands, but he persisted in ordering his curés to demand the obnoxious tickets of confession. The Parliament took rigorous measures against the clergy who obeyed their bishop. Decrees were pronounced against the offending priests, and if they fled to avoid their effect, they were punished like the vilest criminals.

The vicars of St. Etienne were condemned to perpetual banishment, and for greater ignominy the decree was attached to the gallows by the hangman. Another offending priest was sentenced for contumacy to the galleys, and a letter of the Archbishop of Auch, protesting against these measures of the Parliament, was delivered to the hangman to be burned. The king sought to restore religious tranquillity, but the judges and the Jansenists, in their triumph, were as eager for persecution as the Archbishop of Paris.[1]

[1] The incidents of the long contest between the clergy and the judges are fully described in the *Journals* of Barbier and Argenson during these years.

Such affronts offered the clergy would have irritated a community in which respect for the church was strong, but most of the Parisians saw with entire unconcern archbishops' letters burned by the hangman, and sentences against priests dangling from the gallows. The popular ill will was indeed manifested chiefly against the Jesuits, but the Jesuits were now supreme in the Gallican Church, and the secular clergy were only tools in their hands. Moreover, the influence of a skeptical literature was already strong; the philosophers made no distinction between Jesuit and Jansenist, and erelong the community was ready to treat both in the same manner.

In the years following the war of the Austrian Succession, we can notice the presence of new political ideas, even the use of new political terms, which marked the beginning of the intellectual disquiet that in less than forty years resulted in revolution. Most of the writers whose works had so large an influence on political thought now became recognized forces in society. In 1751 began the publication of the Encyclopædia. It soon encountered the anathemas of the church; it was repeatedly put under the ban of the government; but, whether allowed or forbidden, the work progressed, and in its volumes were found discussions of every question of religion and politics and society, with little regard for existing beliefs.

Heretofore, the established forms of government, like the established tenets of religion, had been received almost without question. Doubtless Bayle's dissolving criticism had its influence on the French mind; the "Persian Letters" contained satires on many phases of society and government which would not have been tolerated nor expressed under Louis

XIV.; even the earlier writings of Voltaire were destructive in their tendencies. But such works had not largely modified the feelings of the public towards church or state. It was only when a body of influential writers discussed the nature of government and the foundations of religious belief with a freedom unknown in the past, that the public began to question the wisdom of institutions that had seemed free from danger of overthrow.

Curiously enough, Mme. de Pompadour, whose career might seem the crowning evil of the system that made it possible, was by no means an enemy of the new school of philosophers. "After all, she was one of us," said Voltaire; and so she was. The favorite was always ready to extend her protection to the great iconoclast. Doubtless it was by adroit flattery that Voltaire won her good will, but she was not disquieted by writings which others regarded as subversive of order and religion. Louis XV. perhaps understood better the danger with which they were fraught to the system of which he was the representative, and he was, moreover, a man who viewed all innovators with ill will. It was the royal opposition that long kept Voltaire from the seat in the Academy to which his literary prominence so manifestly entitled him. "If M. de Voltaire does not belong to the Academy," asked a German prince in amazement, "who does belong?" One might well have wondered where forty men could be found more deserving of literary honor than the most famous of French writers. At last the king was persuaded to withdraw his veto, and, in 1746, Voltaire was formally admitted among the immortals. In 1745, Mme. de Pompadour procured for him the position of historiographer, and

he became a regular member of the court; he was a gentleman of the chamber, and entitled to his place among those who stood around the sovereign. But if Voltaire could not long remain an inmate of Sans Souci, it was still more impossible for him to continue a member of the court of Versailles, and, much against his own will, he soon left it forever.

Voltaire was not the only one of the philosophers to whom Mme. de Pompadour extended her favor, and there were few of them who suffered from her ill will. The vices and follies of her career were helping to undermine the old régime, and at the same time she bestowed her patronage on a revolutionary literature aimed at the entire overthrow of existing institutions. It is curious to reflect that while this frivolous woman was acting as a sort of burlesque prime minister, social and political changes were beginning that were to revolutionize France, and to influence modern society more profoundly than any events since the religious reformation of the sixteenth century.

These changes must be considered elsewhere. While philosophers were discussing theories of governing, a war began which severely tested existing institutions, and, though long brewing, it found the government of Louis XV. unprepared.

It was a serious misfortune for the French that the last great soldier under the old régime did not live to take part in the last great war of the French monarchy. Maurice de Saxe was indeed a foreigner by birth, but France was his adopted country, and he had acquired such fame in his profession that no intrigues could have kept him from the command of the army when France was at war. Mme. de Pompadour would

not have sent a Soubise to oppose a Frederick if Maurice had lived, and the disaster of Rossbach would have been averted.

Marshal Saxe might have anticipated a long life, if a frame of extraordinary vigor had not been impaired by a career of unusual dissipation; his physique was as powerful as it was imposing, his feats of strength seemed legendary, he was a true son of Augustus the Strong, and it was said he could bend a horseshoe in his hands. At the close of the war of the Austrian Succession, Maurice retired to Chambord, which had been bestowed upon him as a reward for his success, there to enjoy his fame and the career of amusement for which he was as eager at fifty as when he had been the youthful lover of Adrienne Lecouvreur. The famous château of Chambord had many illustrious occupants, but none of them were more unlike than Marshal Saxe and his immediate predecessor. The last tenant had been Stanislaus, under whom the Chambord once occupied by Diana of Poitiers resembled the abode of a pious and contented bourgeois; order and economy prevailed, the inmates were frequent in prayer, their pleasures were not exciting and were always innocent.

The old palace of the Valois beheld very different scenes when it was occupied by the hero of Fontenoy. Maurice had gone through life filled with dreams of royalty; he had ranged from Madagascar to the islands of the Antilles in search of a land of which he might become the sovereign. These hopes had been disappointed, but at Chambord he gratified himself by assuming some of the insignia of royalty as well as the panoply of warfare. He was allowed to keep there a regiment of soldiers, the ramparts were pa-

trolled by sentinels, cannon guarded the entrance, flags captured from many nations adorned the halls, and, amid these martial surroundings, he divided his time between reviewing his troops and indulging in other and more harmful pleasures. Not only soldiers but singers and actresses made up the court of the ruler of Chambord. Maurice loved low company, so Grimm said, partly from choice and partly from pride; bacchanalians were to his taste, and he desired also to have about him only those who yielded the submission of subjects.

One of the marshal's innumerable intrigues possesses a certain interest for posterity. A young singer at the opera, named Marie Rinteau, gained his favor, and by her he had a daughter who became known as Aurora of Saxe. She married an illegitimate son of Louis XV. and was the ancestress of George Sand, in whose character as well as in whose talent we may perhaps find some points of resemblance with the famous warrior who was her great-grandfather.

In 1750, when Maurice was only fifty-four years of age, his iron frame succumbed to the infirmities caused by his vices. His death left the road clear for such generals as Richelieu and Soubise, and perhaps changed the course of the Seven Years' war.

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